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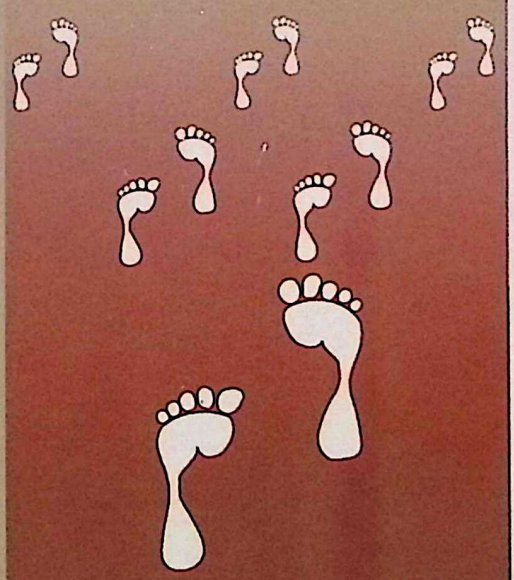

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From the Editorial Desk

Notwithstanding the fact that orality and oral tradition are a fascinating means for identifying cultural identities they are pushed to the position of the esoteric. These are cultural processes which cannot be historically dated but endure in the social consciousness of people. Ranging from epics to myths, genealogies, ballads and numerous other manifestations like traditional medicine, superstitions and sometimes even witchcraft they persist in spite of the abject superiority of the written or recorded word. But such is the enduring power of these unwritten formulations which are subject neither to experimentation nor proof that they have hold over the human psyche. In the Indian context it can be said with impunity that oral did not mean just Folk. Discourse is what distinguished learning and scholarship in Ancient India. It was spontaneous and superior, the scribe was not the fountainhead of knowledge, he was just the technician. It was the oral enunciation that was crucial.

However where communication and communication processes are concerned there has to be a comprehensive view particularly in the context of civilizational linkages. All forms and genres of transmission of knowledge represent articulation which is meaningful in the interpretation of evolution of societies and civilizations. But it has to be conceded that with technology and verbal media somewhere orality has lost its innocence.

Dr. Guy Poitevin, in his incisive paper on Folk Culture, the Oral and Traditional Forms of Communication has with rare understanding and field research addressed this important area.

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It is with profound regret that we record his untimely death. His contribution is very valued and it is hoped that his seminal researches will form the basis of fresh insights in Cultural Studies. His commitment has been unprecedented and uncommon.

D.P. CHATTOPADHYAYA
Editor

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Sandhān, Vol. IV, No. 2, July–December 2004

ARTICLES

Guy Poitevin

Folk Culture, the Oral and Traditional Forms of Communication

Context and Perspective

The present situation on the front of folk culture studies may seem on the whole characterized by three trends.

Folklore is no more among social scientists a category referring to a systematic discipline. In the XIth Congress of the International Society of Folk Narrative Research, J. Handoo noticed how folklorists in the world at large perceived themselves and their discipline obliged "to balance out conflicting essentials." "Formalism, comparative method, text and textuality, tradition, genre, folk-lore have become problematized." Folklore is now in a state of transformation from a rather "conservationist exercise in collecting traditions to a radical enterprise which explores the dynamics of folk production in the study of a variety of expressive forms." The "elite" nature of folklore and its use as a source of power by nationalist or communalist folklorists are questioned by scholars who raised issues of "representation, ideology, and practice." The contemporary scholars' opinion is unanimous: easy "descriptive science" has never reached a high level of abstraction and finds itself in a seriously problematic position as it cannot be defined by specific institutions or definite sets of particular theoretical concepts common to all folklore scholars. What comes under the word 'folklore' is studied by a multiplicity of disciplines with the help of their specific conceptual tools.

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Second, the academic study of traditional, oral cultural forms does often tend to focus nowadays on their performative aspects within organic societies, that is, on their communicational function as symbolic forms which build up the cultural identity of these communities, and the social boundedness of their members. The term folklorist itself tends, for instance nowadays to be restricted to scholars studying tales within the framework of the so-called historico-geographic scholarly tradition or in the perspective of performance theories. On their part, social cultural activists and action oriented folkore centres make efforts to draw upon people's traditions by critically assessing their credentials as a legitimate asset of innovation. They are prompted by a will to ground on them processes of societal transformation by valorizing their inherent values without breach of continuity between past and present—a larger theme that is getting momentum in social and human sciences nowadays.[1] As traditional folk culture cannot be kept aloof anyway from the demands of the present civil society, their attempts aim at making them instrumental to the construction of the Indian public sphere (*Indian Folklore* 2, 2).

Third, at the same time, the scientific, academic approach which has come of age in India and contributes to the interdisciplinary and international growth of folkloristics cannot prevent states, groups and communities from turning traditional oral forms into political assets in the name of national, communal, tribal or sectional identity. This function is predicated upon claims of cultural authenticity which find their origin, assets and yardstick in a quest of identity. Folk culture is politically instrumentalized and politics traditionalized or 'tribalized'. This politics of folklorization (Poitevin 2003b) is obviously a matter of political economy of knowledge and not of folklore science. Yet it cannot be bypassed without serious consequences by scholars of folk culture.

This paper does not intend to give a comprehensive historical account of the variety of trends which prevail in the study of Folk Culture in India, still less an overview of the academic productions in the domain of Indian folkloristics. Such accounts and biblio-

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graphies exist already (Sen Gupta 1967, Handoo 1977, 1987, Calus 1991, Ramanujan 1999, Dwyer 2001, Chatterji 2003, Mills 2003). My exercise restricts itself, first, to folk culture understood in terms of oral traditions from the past. I leave aside in particular the domain of material folk culture, but, mainly, I consider oral, traditional cultural forms from the vantage point of a theory of communication. Folk culture may indeed properly find a prominent place in human and culture sciences within the horizon of communication processes and theories (Bel *et al.* forthcoming). By communication I understand processes of relations between human beings mediated by symbolic forms which bind a human collective. In this regard, anything can be given the function and status of a binding symbolic form, and moreover, mean anything, that is to say, everything may become a mediating device as per the intent of a speaker's act of speech at a given moment and in particular historical circumstances.[2] As a consequence ambivalence and ambiguity inevitably characterize processes of oral communication more than any other regime.

Such is particularly the case when we look at the semantic destiny in India of the very idioms of 'folklore,' 'oral traditions,' 'folk culture', etc. which are themselves oral forms of communication in the present—symbolic forms of social binding. By referring to past oral traditions and possibly promoting their survival or on the contrary trying to eschew them from the horizon of a 'civilized' culture, they significantly inflect, by discursively reapproriating them, the historical semantics and function of those oral cultural forms which had yesterday their own way of binding organic societies. Folklore as people's knowledge is indeed not the same as the knowledge that we construct of folk pristine culture to serve our own purposes of binding, nowadays, a group, a community or a nation. Still both discourses operate as oral, cultural forms of symbolic communication and bind groups. The process of construction of oral forms of folk culture from yesteryear into folklore as assets, nowadays, of authentic, original identity and social recognition is a discursive process too. Traditional forms of communication are very much with us with the same binding

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function, but have become a matter of political economy of knowledge and communication science.

Folklorists who do not recognize any more the notion of folklore as an academic disciplinary category on account of their objectionable past, colonialist, nationalist or orientalist connotations do technically separate them from any political use and reappropriation, and study them as performative cultural forms of communication. But this scientifically correct depoliticization may lead as well academics to overlook the political role that they actually played yesterday while similarly preventing them from assessing the modes and aims of their politicization today. Oral traditions had yesterday a political function of constructing communities symbolically conscious of their identity and social status, and of the nature and legitimacy of their forms of social relations. No wonder that they can be instrumentalized again as to serve similar purposes nowadays. The reason is the essentially political nature of orality. This dimension will be present all through this paper especially in the overview of the pre-scientific stages which marked the years of dependent infancy and scholarly heteronomy of folk studies in colonial India.

Three more clarifications. First, my focus is on the most common dimension of orality of traditional forms as opposed to writing. My first purpose is of defining the specificity of a regime of oral communication as simply described or taken for granted in a number of substantive folk performance studies. To my knowledge this regime needs being conceptualized for itself. I shall categorize it as 'orature' in the first part of this essay.

The focus on the communicational specificity of orality does nevertheless not imply that folk cultural forms did not or cannot exist as well in written and printed forms which recast their import and make them reach beyond the ethnic boundaries of their original audiences, or serve other purposes. Folklore scholars in the world at large and now in India (Datta 1999) in particular do transcend an initial approach in dichotomic terms of mutual exclusivity of orality and writing. "The admixture of orality, writing and print in Europe" has recently been widely documented by

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several cultural and literary historians (Blackburn 200b: 7-16). The false divide of orality and writing overlaps with the equally misleading construction of tradition as antithetical to modernity. "Polarisation of the pure oral and the defiled industrial age of which the printing press was an agent" is now discarded as a simplistic cliché (Blackburn 2003b: 2-4). History testifies to a constant blending of orality and writing, that is, to a strong resilience of oral forms of communication. I shall show this with reference to judicial practices in part 2.

Moreover emotional and political stands have often turned folklore students into partisan 'traditionalist' and/or 'nationalist' activists on the ground of ready made equations of 'folk culture,' 'tradition,' 'identity,' 'origin,' 'authenticity,' 'purity' (Bendix 1997). Such practices of cultural folk politics leading to traditionalization of politics and politics of folklorization are predicated upon attitudes of ascendancy and political motivations which pre-empt the possibility of a genuine and fruitful reappropriation of their past by individuals and collectives. It may even lead towards disturbing slogans and agendas detrimental to professional folklore research in India (Poitevin 2002b). We shall see, in part 2, how and why these phantoms of Romanticism and Orientalism together with the assumptions of an Enlightened nationalist "science of folklore" brought by western scholars did easily appeal to Indian folklorists and lure them towards nationalist politics of folklorization (Stock 1990, Poitevin 2003b) in the name of folklore turned into an essentialist argument of stable, pure and genuine identity.

Secondly, a preliminary discussion of the concept of 'tradition' though not out of place here would nevertheless divert from my central focus, that is, orality and communication. I wish only to state that I eschew altogether any essentialist notion of tradition. I understand it exclusively on the strength of its etymology as a definite and specific process of 'transmission' of knowledge: a communicational mode of handing on and sharing with. Any essentialist conceptualization of tradition may be considered as an alibi for other agendas. Here is the divide which should be sorted

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out from the outset between those concerned with culture studies and those committed to culture strategies, which is present nowadays in India.

Thirdly, I conceptually distinguish mediation and medium. I deal with orality in particular and for that matter oral tradition in general as a modality of mediation. I shall therefore focus on folk studies which may help to highlight the function of social mediation of folk oral traditions because in my view this is a way among others for folklore studies to head towards a rewarding future within a performative cognitive approach. The functional distinction of mediation as a concept of transitivity implies two connotations: first, a will to signification, that is to "making sense" with a medium or "fabricating a meaning" with a sign which precisely signifies, and, second, a will to establish a specifically human relation by sharing with someone else that process of signification through a signifier.

By human communication I conceptually understand a process pursuing three goals: articulate, express and convince. It implies a tripartite structuration: reality facing man as its absolute 'other', man's capacity to mentally apprehend and thus symbolically appropriate and control that 'otherness', and the signs or 'media' which as signifiers mediate simultaneously between man and the reality, on the one hand, and man and man on the other. Traditional oral forms are perfect exemplars of this tripartite constitution.

I wish to insist on the pragmatical dimensions of folk oral traditions as cultural forms of symbolic communication because they are too often crippled by an unduly prominent focus on their textuality. In this regard, they compare with industrial techniques meant to appropriate and control the material 'otherness' of the physical world. These techniques are similarly signifiers of a meaning, that is, a man's interpretation of physical nature, a man's design over it in the future and men's social relations devised to reach the desired physical transformation. Traditions are signifiers which do fabricate a meaning, that is, symbolically process in the present a given social or physical environment as to serve a design

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of control over it in the future, while binding a group at its image. From the vantage point of a communication theory, tradition and technology are two different modes of mediation, namely, of construction of symbolic forms of social communication with a tripartite function.

Moreover, a rigorous phenomenological analysis of traditions as resources inherited from the past is not at pains to apprehend them a modality of the present, elements of a permanently available potential horizon of reactivations (Housset 2000: 107). This *eidos* confirms and justifies the scientific judgement of the historian for whom "traditions are not self-created" but "consciously chosen" "to suit our present needs" (Thapar 2000: 23). Traditions are "socially controlled both in their making as well as in the selection from them of what is required for contemporary purposes" (*Ibid.* 25). The voice of the historian proves here salubrious to prevent "juggling with history" (*Ibid.* 23).

That voice reminds us in particular that the very words which were initially used to refer to 'folk culture,' such as 'folklore,' 'primitive traditions,' 'customs,' 'superstitions' remain in India markers of the colonial moment in the history of the sub-continent. They were imported as an epistemological weapon fitting other systems of the colonizer's knowledge, science, administration and governance. Since then they have been applied to Indian folk realia construed with reference to Western-Europe epistemological models of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The theoretical concepts of these models were simply grafted on an Indian social configuration which was sociologically differently structured (for instance, clear cut distinctions were wrongly made to culturally and socially oppose hunters, gatherers, tribes, castes, village-folk society, urban-modern culture, etc.). Nobody would dare say that the linguistic prescriptions of yesteryear do not bear any more today upon our perceptions and insight. Indian scholars have got to be critically cautious about the semantics of their discourses (Carlos 1998: 51-66, Prasad 1998: 211-2). Their concern is to elaborate a discourse of their own (Blackburn and Ramanujan 1986, Ramanujan 1999), hopefully

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capable of contributing to the construction of the Indian public sphere (See *Indian Folklore,* 2001, vol. 2, n. 2, Muthukumaraswamy 2002).

I
Orality or the Powers of Vocality

Orality of Knowledge in Ancient India

In India, the modernist decoy of the superiority of writing over speech is an imported lure. The excellence and prominence of the phonemes of utterances over the written signs were a distinctive and general feature of Ancient India. This opposition is all the more noticeable and significant by its contrast with two other facts. First, the number of literary and technical texts, treaties specialized in the art of governance for the education of the prince, and books to be kept for administrative, judicial, economic, accounting and ruling purposes (see the famous *Arthashastra*) show that books were neither strange or rare things in 'classical' India. Secondly, a diverse and rich epigraphy flourishes since the third century BC. Writing and reading were constant and every day practices.

Yet, in Ancient India the surbordination of the writing to linguistic norms and rules which preside over the production of discourse is absolute. The technique of the scribe enjoys no other autonomy than that of its aesthetic quality. For Sankara (seventh or eighth century BC), the grapheme is false, unreal, deceptive; writing spells darkness. The phoneme alone is real (Malamoud 1997: 85-90). The king listens and dictates. The scribe is only a servant, an intermediary between the king and the written document. The knowledge expected from him is often much larger than just his graphic competence as a scribe: he should be a seasoned expert in rhetorics, grammar, logic, phonetics, etc. A "complete expression" is a monument of linguistic performance (*Ibid.* 91-2). Writing is essentially an extremely sophisticated and effective technique of transcription. Its excellence consists in

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being subservient and therefore subordinate to the oral speech. The yardstick of that excellence is its capacity of faithful recording of the spoken word (*Ibid.* 99). The knowledge of the script and its techniques is not to be mistaken with the knowledge itself (*Ibid.* 99). In Ancient India one can be highly knowledgeable while remaining illiterate.

Some crucial zones of knowledge should even not be written or at least not be imparted through a written text. Such is the case with Veda, the knowledge *par excellence*, which can be apprehended only through a living speech. The sacred revelation is a *shruti:* a set of phonemes to hear and to be repeated by heart so that they be heard. The 'learned man's is a *shrotiya*, one who is particularly conversant with the whole mass of sound sequences which incorporate the authentic knowledge (*Ibid.* 93, 106). The *shrotiya* is moreover a 'seer', a *rishi*, one who has seen the realities that the Vedic words reveal. Vedic sounds correspond to cosmic visions that they echo while putting the attentive listener on the way to heaven.

Writing has two kinds of defects. Firstly, it is exposed to the risk of semantic loss for the reason that the transcendent dimension of language originates in the very sounds of the human voice. The latter is the only repository of true knowledge being the organ which carries the sound vibrations of the words (*Ibid.* 89). The written text is a source of knowledge to that extent only that it leads towards these sounds. It is therefore wrong to expect a better preservation of true knowledge through writing than through memory. Traditional India is on the lookout for mistakes which are bound to occur once texts are written down on account of the carelessness and laziness of those who would passively rely on books, and, as a rule, because bookish knowledge is illegitimate and precarious.

Secondly, a written text is a frightening device on three main accounts. It is particularly connected with the king's power thanks to the scribes in charge of accounts and systems of control as displayed in the *Arthashastra.* It is above all connected with the inescapable divine power of Yama. Established as ruler of the

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kingdom of the dead, Yama stands as the perfect model to be emulated by the king on earth. "God writer," Yama's function as clerk of the gods consists in imparting to each and every one his destiny as a result of the accounting of deeds that he kept in the books of archives. By extension, writing is associated with moneylenders and their accounts. Writing, in short, is a metaphor of summons and sentence. Writing lines up destiny and death (Porcher 1995: 80) along time limits which cannot be crossed over. Writing is scary not because of its dead letter but because its letter is deadening (Malamoud 1997: 100). The written line is a death line.

Nexus of Orality and Writing

A second general feature of significance is the nexus of orality and writing. "While we know that folklore exists in a wide range of forms, oral, written and printed, many of us have been reluctant to embrace that fact in research," writes Blackburn. For instance," a comprehensive analysis of print and folklore in India has not yet been published."

> Yet, time and time again, whenever a specific case is investigated, we find that print, writing and oral traditions tend to coexist, although sometimes for different purposes, usually in different spheres and often with different consequences. This book will present another demonstration of the commingling thesis, but it will also go a bit further: it will argue that print, in Tamil in the nineteenth century, far from widening the gap between literary culture and oral tradition, actually bridged it and brought them together in the form of printed folklore (Blackburn 2003b: 2, 3, 8, 12).

Only a few Indian writers would like to stress the interaction of the double streams of Indian literature, orality and writing (Ramanujan 1999, Narayan Rao 2001).

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> Although attention has been given to study the relation between oral traditions and written literature, Indian scholars are yet to formulate methods or theories as to combine literary theories and folklore studies with an aim to devise indigenous methods of studying folklore (Carlos 1998: 51-3).

Blackburn's work (Blackburn 2001a, 2001b, 2003a, 2003b: 2) with its focus on the coexistence and intricate nexus of orality, writing and print, is a reference case study in this respect, as far as India is concerned.

Yet from the point of view of a social theory of communication understood as we defined it, the focus should not essentially be on comparative rhetorics or on how oral and written forms have been actively contributing together in shaping "the actual regularities of Indian society and civilization, both synchronically and diachronically in a highly interdependent manner" (Handoo 1998: 1). The comparative study of various forms, genres and styles of transmission refers to 'media' only. What matters is the mediation process that they serve.

For that matter "performance studies" shall offer a better approach as they focus on the event of language within a context, that is, ultimately, on the speaker's voice and the intent of his/her act of speech (Blackburn 1988 Bauman 1989, Poitevin 2001a: 19, Glassie 2001: 43-8). "Combining literary as well as folkloristic methods" may certainly prove a useful tool for understanding the cultural transaction of "tradition-bound groups and individuals" as a cultural form (Carlos 1998: 51). But this leaves aside on the one hand the query about the structural specificities of orality *per se* as a complex and multiple mode of articulation, expression and symbolic exchange, and on the other hand, obliterates speaker and audience. It leaves aside the very process of communication as a will to signify something to someone else by expressing one's view or conviction out of a will to see it shared by interlocutors.

A typical example of such an attempt can be seen in the book Many Ramayanas edited by Paula Richman. The many and contrasting tellings of the epics testify to "the many tellings of the

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tale." "Throughout history multiple voices were heard within the Ramayana tradition." "The Ramayana tradition permits endless refashioning of the story, sometimes in actual opposition to the ways in which the story has previously been told." These hundred Ramayanas "possess their own logic, their own intended audience" (Richman 1992: 8-9). The study should therefore highlight how and why particular people select particular incidents to express their view of reality."

> Ramayana tellings provide a set of resources on which people have drawn—in their own way and for their own purposes—in order to accuse, justify, mediate, debate, and more (Ibid. 12).

The same is to be said of the folk and tribal versions of the Mahabharata (Singh 1993). Our own research (Poitevin 2001b, 2002a: 46-103) on the figure of Sītā in the grindmill songs discovers it as a largely reinvented, freely commented upon and often deeply altered symbolic form. The latter is not only very selectively owned but reconstructed by the peasant singers in order to configure Sītā's life during her forest exile (vanavās) at the image of their own harassment by in-laws (sasurvās) during their stay in their "alien house."

Yet the verses of oral tradition that I shall draw from the same tradition of grindmill songs differ still further from these multiple performances of retellings because these performances relate to prior texts which they transform: they borrow to refute or question, but from a given code or prescribed pool. "Every author...dips into it and brings out a unique crystallization, a new text with a unique texture and a fresh context" (Richman 1992: 8).

The tradition of grindmill songs exemplifies a fresh telling in its own right. It retains an exclusively oral mode of circulation for a second reason, namely, because it is a domestic tradition of women kept confined within the home and let among themselves exchanging at will intimate feelings. Such women's emotions were of no interest and of no consequence for men of a patriarchal

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society, literary being moreover a male and upper class prerogative alien to common womanfolk.

The Letter and the Voice

Paradoxically, we know something about Ancient India regrettably but unavoidably through textual monuments only. The living orality of past times is definitely beyond reach. But people's traditions of orality as fonts of knowledge and privileged forms of communication remain very much with us in the sub-continent. They undoubtedly give us a clue of what could mean orality. I shall dwell on one outstanding example, that of the immense and purely feminine tradition of the grindmill songs, because it highlights the privileged gender connection of womanfolk with orality and, conversely, manfolk with writing (Poitevin and Rairkar 1993, 1996). This is an emblematic example on two accounts. First, in the sense that this grindmill songs tradition as such has never been written or printed. This distinguishes it from the great majority of Indian folklore traditions. The import of this distinctive feature and the way it should be methodologically investigated may be stressed as a case in point.

Peasant women at their grindmill figure out writing as a writing on the wall. They know only one writing, that of the "Letter" written by Satvi, "the forest demoness," or sometimes by or with her companion, god Brahma, on the forehead of every new born baby on the fifth day after his birth (Poitevin and Rairkar 1993: 41-58). Satvi first growls around the house and encircles it as an army on a campaign lying in ambush before storming the place. The danger is imminent. All evil spirits are to be chased away and evil eyes dispelled by appropriate rituals.

Then

On the Fifth Day, Satvi stands in a corner
At the stroke of midnight, she sets the Letter and departs.

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On the Fifth Day, she secretly sets the Letter
While my darling, my Radha, lies fast asleep.

On the Fifth Day, Satvi comes in a hurry
O god! Set a fine letter upon my girl's destiny.

Oil poured, wicker placed in it, the lamp burns all night long
God Brahma spent all night placing the fateful Letter

Satvi sets the Letter while Brahma reads out what's to be written
Once the Letter is set, he leaves without a word to anyone.

The "placing of the Letter" inspires a deadly fear, "my strength fails me," because "no one knows its meaning," "What does the Letter bring? No one can say." "What lies in my daughter's fate? I cannot fathom it."

The frightening secrecy of the divine power is in total contrast to the compulsion to share words and sing with women companions while grinding (Poitevin and Rairkar 1996: 113-37). "While grinding and pounding, I poured out what was in my heart. If one sits to grind then one should talk with the mill. I confide to you fortune and misfortune of my heart"

I do the grinding—Why should I do it?
To tell you the sorrows in my heart.

Verses of feebleness, grinding is there to sing them
Woman, my weakness has gone away playing this game.

While grinding at dawn, my mind is filled with exhilaration
On getting up in the morning, I sing verses, my Ramayana.

"I had sung the verses of my weakness on the millstone. My mind feels transported to sing songs. The songs of the bygone days have remained in my mind. I sang songs, pouring out my feelings. I am going to tell the world the recollection of my mother's songs"

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Morning, the chariot hums like waters
My mother tells me words like gold.

O Lord mill, I try hard to set you in motion
Sita, my mother, she sang to me the history.

As with the Vedic seers, letters and written text are no language worth the name. They are not adequate to the reality and knowledge that women peasants carry within them. The compulsion to sing is all the more urgent that normal words even are not commensurate with the inner feelings and vision. All the many resources of the human voice, intonation, poetry, tunes and physical engagement of the whole body are required. This is more than 'orality', this is what I shall categorize later on as 'orature'

O Lord mill, I battle with you
I pull you, stone, to the rhythm of songs.

Seated at the mill, do not speak ruggedly
Enraptured by the songs keep up rotating.

"Singers get transported by the songs" while "pouring out their feelings. When I rotate the mill, I pull at full speed. I do pull the stone, carried away by the songs." Women singers differ nevertheless from the Vedic seers as their compulsion to sing is not under the spell of other-worldly visions forcefully revealed to them. What they express and communicate with the many resources of their voice and body is their own women's intimate knowledge only. Their word is spontaneous, autonomous, emerging from within. It comes from such an inner experience that the capacity of intonation and tunes of the human voice only can prove appropriate to express the joy and suffering that their whole being, soul and body, is experiencing.

While voicing through poetry, melism and tunes an experience of life that can by no means be expressed and communicated through script and letters, the singers moreover in the same

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moment freely assert themselves, break inhibiting fears and constraints, encourage one another to speak up. "Woman, do not grind in silence while grinding early at dawn! Do not give the mill its feed in silence. The girl does not talk with the mill, she is withdrawn"

How long should I pull the stone and confide my thoughts?
When I sit to grind and pound my myna bursts into tears.

When god's letter enforces an unwanted lot, woman's voice cries for dignity against inequitous orders.

God in heaven is a hardened potter
He makes pots and breaks them. To hell with his business.

Black millet bran is useless to anybody
Oh Ram, who is responsible for creating this woman's life?

I am not allowed to take the name of Ram
My life is a woman's life, always controlled by others.

Sister, what may I confide in you? I have fallen into their clutches
My husband, my companion, acts badly with me.

Woman, do not call your husband 'My Lord! My Lord!'
Men are dark serpents. You don't know when they'll bite you.

Discordant feelings and rebellious words at home are a first step towards discourses of contestation in public spaces. They give a hint and nurture a will to free speech outside the domestic sphere as well. Speech is the foundation faculty of humankind to assert itself against repressive orders. Folk culture—mainly spontaneously sung poetry and mythus of identity construction among lower status communities—does actually prove to be a cornerstone for spontaneous moves of self-assertion at the initiative of members from subaltern communities and cultural

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action groups by drawing upon past symbolic heritages without breach of continuity or alien instrumentalization (Poitevin 2001c, Shinde, forthcoming, Jogdanda, forthcoming).

A Concept of Orature as a System of Intertwined Rhetorics

We had been told by Plato that writing is not only powerless against forgetfulness but its very cause far from being its remedy. To the god Theuth who brings him the letters that he has just invented as a "medicine for the memory," Thamus, the king of Egypt, refuses to be convinced that the god should provide his subjects with them. He justifies his denial as follows.

> You have said exactly the contrary of what they actually achieve. They will provoke oblivious in those who will learn them, because they will not take care of their memory any more, and relying on writing, they will remember things through external and alien signs, and not from within. It is therefore not for memory but for rememorisation that you have found a medicine. (*Plato,* Phedre *275 a*).

The immense and immemorial tradition of women's grindmill songs in India is a topical example of how oral memory resorts to three cognitive capacities: poetry, intonation and melody (Bel 2000). These three modes of construction, articulation and expression of knowledge should become the privileged subject matter of analytical investigation in any study of popular oral traditions especially when they take the accomplished form of speech-song. As oral transmission of Meanings, grindmill songs transcend the limits of the verbalized and the verbalizable through incorporating three main communication strategies: as speech acts or linguistic practices they use the words and forms of a lexicon and linguistic system; as intonation or speech inflections they use the prosodic tools of a particular intonation system and the lyric resources of poetry; as tunes they avail of the expressive potentialities of melism and melodic patterns available to them.

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On the one hand, the songs belong to the domain of speech prosody, both "lexical" (*word stress*, *tone* and *quantity*) and suprasegmental or "non-lexical" (*intonation proper*) (Hirst & Di Cristo eds., 1998). Once we know that the prosodic features of a language are the first ones acquired at an early age, and that the women sitting and singing on their mill at dawn since their youngest age could avail of no formal musical learning, it is legitimate to expect that the same sophisticated expressive tools and strategies of speech prosody will play a significant role in their half-improvised singing as substitutes to patterns which they have not learnt by formal musical training (Bel 2000). On the other hand, and this is a feature of particular importance in the case of grindmill songs, the tunes reappropriate these linguistic means at another level of melodic expression without modelling their variations on strict tonal patterns. They do this in a more flexible manner than do many other forms of popular traditions, especially the classical tonal traditions.

The language of the grindmill songs may severely suffer from its rustic and sometimes almost inexistent syntax. This prevents the refined articulation of logical and affective subtleties. But this deficiency is altogether immaterial—and possibly a blessing in disguise—as their rhetoric infirmity is more than compensated by (i) the symbolic potency of the gesture and moves of the body, (ii) the tone and intonation of the voice, (iii) the rhythm and phonetic economy of the utterance, (iv) the alliterations and the rhyme of the verses and (v) the tune of the whole song with the melism on particular words and phonemes. The written sign is miserably deprived of all these resources of vocality.

I coin 'orature' after 'literature' to refer to this sophisticated, composite texture of intertwined systems of expression and symbolic communication which vividly and forcefully denies the supremacy of 'literature'. Linguistically speaking, our attention and study should therefore focus on the potentialities of these five intermingling rhetorics if we want to apprehend the power of orature as the regime of expression and symbolic communication specific to people's oral traditions.

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This power is particularly impressive in the indefinitely diverse personal styles of expressivity of women performers, but the same ought equally to be said with regard to story-tellers, epic bards, lyric singers, etc. This diversity is the outcome of constant trade-offs between 'language', 'poetry' and 'music', manifestations and modulations of various prosodic systems which in the subjective dimensions of speech communication transcend the normative frameworks of lexical constraints, morphological rules, syntactic norms, intonation patterns and musical structures.

This relative freedom taken by the speakers—singers to disrupt these various linguistic frameworks, improvise and modulate upon them is a response to the urgent need felt by women of expressing and communicating between themselves only. The performers perform for no audience whatsoever, even indirectly or by implication. The written codes abide by elaborate aesthetic rules of perfection and subject themselves to the appreciation of *literati.* The oral forms are under the irrepressible spell of a need to express oneself and look for communication, fusion, liaison and communion. No wonder therefore if phonemes are far from realizing their canonical forms and sometimes hard to catch, various disfluencies break the 'right' (that is, textual or academic) linguistic conventions, and speech prosody often disrupts the syntactic organization. In spite of this or rather possibly thanks to this, spontaneous speakers understand each other well and often more significantly than they would through linguistically correct speech practices.

A striking feature in the performance of grindmill songs is, for instance, a wide discrepancy between the conventional textual material as recited by performers to be written down on cards for archiving purposes, and its rendering in the actual singing. Characteristic figures of spontaneous speech are introduced in this process, notably: a fragmentation of syntactic units, the chunking of words, repetitions, phatic markers and 'asyntactic' or 'dissyntactic' ruptures. Emphasis on the most significant words is best achieved by placing them on a complex melodic pattern so that they are performed in a melism. Thus, in the absence of a

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system of codification for tunes and lyrics—the distich itself of the grindmill songs is not a strictly codified form—performers feel free to explore melodic (tonal and temporal) structures emphasizing the meaning of words, or conveying additional meanings that the core lyrics did not articulate. Since the linguistic structures and the musical models may be activated independently, the women singers' effective realization of speech-song can freely 'appropriate' language forms at the acoustic, phonetic, prosodic, semantic, syntactic and emotional levels.

For analytical purposes, within the framework of performance theory, three different dimensions can be conceptually differentiated as structurally constitutive of that distinct regime of cognition, expression and symbolic communication that I call 'orature,' namely, context, signature and semiosis. Their consistency becomes the specific focus of a study of all oral traditions (Poitevin 2003c). "The key to deciphering the musical and textual content may reside in the performance itself with all its extralinguistic and extramusical features" (Bel 2000). The context is not an appendix to be added as a footnote to the meaning of an act of speech, or its external scenery and dècor for embellishment. The context is a constitutive dimension of the spoken word, which can only be misunderstood once heard out of context. Its meaning is not directly borne out by lexicon and grammar. What it means to say, its signification, is the result of all the illocutory acts that the speaker performs by means of the utterance.

The grindmill songs tradition is, for instance, embedded in the whole task of grinding at dawn as physical agency and daily work ritual incumbent on women and considered by them as the epitome of their *raison d'etre* as housewife. The moves of the entire body, the breathing scansions, the modulations of the singers' voice among the other voices in the room (of children and other family members, of cattle and morning activities in the stable such as feeding the cattle or milking the cows, of the cock-crow which signals the start of the whole day chores, etc.), the rhythmic noise of the arm rings which accompanies the rattling of the millstones,

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the latter's location and the time of grinding, etc. are constituents of the significance of the speech-song. There is an organic link between the grinding work at dawn and the song as event of speech: the latter does not exist any more once the grinding is over, and the tradition is doomed to disappear with the end of hand-grinding. Above all, the speech-song on the mill is never an *a parte*. It is always a face to face speech. As a sign, it refers to an interpretive community.

Such is also the function of tales and narratives (*katha*) which do not exist without an audience. Short of an addressee, reduced to the state of pure text which is narrated, recorded on tape, archived on shelves, grindmill songs—and for that matter any popular tradition—become simple mental objects which may loiter in anybody's mind, tunes which can be mumbled by anybody, any time, anywhere, or picked up by any kind of vested interest—an abandoned property which has deserted its owner and belongs nowhere. They cease to be linguistic signs of symbolic communication binding subjects to one another: media with no mediation. An oral tradition as event of speech has always a 'respondent', even though virtual. Even a peasant woman singing alone on her millstone herits a tradition of which she is the heir: she receives a song which is addressed to her by previous generations; she appropriates her heritage with the assignment to hand it down to all her sisters of today and tomorrow. The same is the case with a tale and a narrative till they become pure texts, dead signs, cultural fossils. They cease then to be themselves, that is, a living word in a ritual, a feast, a carnival, a celebration, a collective function, a liturgy, in the middle of an audience of which the narrator is part and parcel whatever may be that audience, a family, a clan, a caste, an ethny, a region, a nation, etc. A first methodological principle of study of people's oral tradition is therefore their "multivocal discursivity" (Vecchione 1997: 102) staged by the performance.

The second analytical level is that of the signature. This is the level of a claim to authority and ownership over the act of speech as utterance and claim to knowledge. The written tradition has

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the concepts of authorship and copyright. What about the authorship of and right over, community's oral traditions? The oral linguistic sign exists only in the flow of a collective tradition which constantly feeds on itself and thrives differently depending upon its various carriers, performers and performances. A tale, a narrative, a grindmill song are carried by more or less gifted individuals who are appreciated and honoured for their talents, or sometimes singled out as a collective: a family, a clan, a sub-caste, a group of professionals with appropriate skills, means and status. But people's traditions usually do not need to recognize a single or individual author with a reserved right to ownership. Each and every one in the community is their author, to the extent it recognizes herself in the speech of another one. The community is its ultimate author and owner.

In this respect, instead of concepts of copyright and authorship, we may analytically differentiate three kinds of agency: source agency, authority agency and heritage agency. The source agency is, for instance in the case of the grindmill songs, the irrepressible compulsion of self-expression. The authority agency is explicitly declared in the collective signature of authentification which is stated in the tradition of grindmill songs with the stereotyped utterance *I tell you, woman!* (Poitevin & Rairkar 1996: 256-8). The formula is characteristic of the style of enunciation of that tradition. Formula of authentification, it is also the signature of identification of the author, but an author who identifies herself as "woman", one of the "race of women," *bai jat* and not an individual who would assert herself through a distinctive opposition to her community or other women of that community. The heritage agency is the peasant women community. Through the 'tradition' of speech-songs, that is to say, through handing them down along centuries at dawn with the recognition, sanction, agreement, appropriation and transformation by successive generations, the performers constantly built and rebuilt a memory of Self of which they remain the authorized heir as a community. As a consequence, the natural carriers and heirs of a living tradition ought to be recognized as the privileged though not

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exclusive authority, having the competence and duty to carry it further, contextualize enliven and fulfil its potentialities, that is, to interpret and own it.

The third analytical level is that of the semiosis, that is, the process of significance as production and transmission of meanings through signs. This process occurs—to refer again to our comprehensive example of grindmill songs—through the blending of (1) the spoken words and phrases which are subject to lexical, syntactic and prosodic rules; (2) the poetic form of a distich which does not abide by strict rigid metric rules but spontaneously puts up words together in sets with rhythm and rhyme in order to eventually pull them from the banal prosody of everyday language forms' up to a lyric dimension; (3) the tune which eventually transfigures the whole linguistic material when the dynamics specific to the musical semiotics carries away the words with their lyrics towards another semantic argumentation of a totally different order.

As poetry, the lyrics of the text is pregnant with an irreducible metaphoric dimension, that of a 'poetic potency' which transforms the linguistic material and cannot be verbalized by the latter. The European medieval scholars were already trying to characterize the poetic discourse in terms of its final causes: *delectatio* (delight), *firmitas memoriae* (steadfastness of memory), *lucida ac vetusta brevitas* (lucid and lasting brevity). These distinctive features were exemplified by directives. For the grindmill songs as for the romanic poetic languages, the verse plays a crucial role in the structuring of the phrase acting as a mould and a catalyst. Its rhythmic forms operate upon the verbal material to produce combinations of words and phrases as to coincide with the most simple syntactic structure. The verse has no definite metric, but rythms, pace, cadence, dynamic forms, a proportionality constitutive of a phonic structure, movements phonetically tuned or assorted, the rhyme being only the last of these tunings at the end of the verse. Such terms as *modulatio* (modulation), *consonantia* (consonance), *connumeratio* (measuring) used in the West by the Ancients and the medieval theoreticians may equally be retained

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as most appropriate to qualify the form of the poetic rhythm of a number of Indian oral traditions. If we agree to identify the rhythm or *modulatio*, in actual practice, with the simultaneous application of particular rules of isosyllabism and homophony, *consonantia* may point to homophony, and *connumeratio* to isosyllabism (Zumthor 1975: 125, 128).

More than through the lyrics, it is mainly as melody that the speech-song liberates itself totally from the support of words and transcends the tonal patterns of ordinary speech prosody. Syntactic/semantic structures are often incomplete or inexistent. They cannot therefore originate the tonal canvas: tunes offer the tonal canvas. "The conventional tonal canvas is not a syntactic/semantic structure but the tune on which songs are sung. And it is moreover difficult to abstract tunes from the lyrics of songs." (Bel 2000). The songs' improvised singing is instituted by the interaction of two distinct semiotic spaces, namely, intonation and melody. Intonation is a globalization process commanding a force of cohesion, a space of invariants displaying structures of expression. The second function, melism—melodic/prosodic inventive diversions—belongs to the domain of expression of subjectivity and affectivity. Intonation and melody point to excursions within a space of subjectivity and variability. Words might contain clues to the study of intonation and vice versa; but lyrics and melody are the two outstanding semiotic systems available and specific to orature.

II
Folklore and Identity

Parallel to the multiplicity of disciplines and procedures concerned with the study of folk cultures *for themselves*, the latter have since the beginning of their study in India been construed as 'folklore." They thrived as such but *for others* in discourses about them with two functions, first, to answer queries of identity and, second, symbolically define the social rapports to be entertained with their authors. This part will contrast this second discursive life with their

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actual life as people's culture, two modes quite apart from social communication.

Folklore in the Colonial Knowledge System

Like anthropology, science and practice of folklore came to India as part of the colonial project (Dorson ed. 1968, Raheja 1996, Naithani 1997, 2001a, 2001b, Maskiell 1999, Dalmia 2001). The British rulers' folklore science is the product, theoretically and practically, of a will to colonize and govern the "primitives," The colonial political economy of knowledge constructs Indian folk culture as 'folklore,' coining thus one of the most significant symbolic category of its civilizing practices and imperial relations with India's folk. Besides the most common terms of "primitive belief and custom," the other terms used to delineate the constituency of the 'empire theory' of folklore are "widespread mass of superstitions," "beliefs and practices of the wild tribes and low castes," but also "the elaborated rituals of the twice-born" for the reason that the latter do not differ from those of "the primitive elements of the population." As for the "ignorant, ... unclean classes dwelling in the large centres of population" they "share the superstitions of the remote areas." For that science, 'folk' "models a cognitive relationship which also implies a value judgement. To be more specific it is a way of establishing a relationship of alterity by characterizing certain societies, or certain forms within civilized society as being incommensurable with civilizational forms and values"[3] (Chatterji 2003).

The first leading folklorists in the last decades of the nineteenth century[4] were British officers, civil servants, scholars or civilians, and foreign missionaries whom the natives were supplying with valuable materia.[5] Two towering figures, R. Carnac and W. Crooke, define the fate of Indian folklore research in India.[6] Their main concern is with the unique, the useful and the influential. Their collections come most of the time from dominant groups, and exotic and colourful communities. The W. Crookes's objectives are three-fold.

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> In the first place, I desired to collect for the use of all officers whose work lies among the rural classes... Second, ...stimulate enquiry, particularly among the educated races of the country, who have, as yet, done little to enable Europeans to gain a fuller and more sympathetic knowledge of their rural brethren; and lastly, ...I hope that European scholars may find in these pages some fresh examples of familiar principles.... The more we explore these popular superstitions and usages, the nearer are we likely to attain to the discovery of the basis on which Hinduism has been founded (Crooke 1925).

With regard to the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework, the elaborate introduction of Enthoven to *The Folklore of Bombay* (1924: 10-28) clearly reflects the cultural epistemology of the colonial rulers in India. While focussing on the "mass of the population" and their "primitive belief and custom," colonial science of folklore constructs its object of knowledge by a cognitive process of selective partition. Are folklore those cultural materials which signal themselves as most distant from and alien to, the developed, rational and scientific culture of the colonial masters. Backwardness and strangeness are the qualifying parameters for a cultural object to become a matter of a distinct theoretical processing called folklore science. Otherness is the criterion of constitution of the constituency of folklore. Folklore is what stands apart by being discriminated upon as "primitive" or "rudimentary," and the origin of which is sought to be explained after having been apprehended with distinctively appropriate concepts.

George Campbell, ethnologist and later Governor of Bengal (1871-74), persuades the *Asiatic Society* to add an "exhibition of the Aborigines" to the next Agricultural Exhibition, in which, without in any way degrading men and brethren to the position of animals, opportunity should be given for studying man at least to the same extent to which animals are studied. "Individuals of pronounced type" would be placed as "living exhibits" "in booths or stalls divided into compartments, like the boxes in a theatre or the shops in a bazar." These "biped specimens" of "wild tribes" classified

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according to races and tribes "should sit each in his own stall, should receive and converse with the public, and submit to be photographed, printed, taken off in casts, and otherwise reasonably, dealt with, in the interests of science." "With respect to clothing," these "wild creatures" would be exhibited "in their native and characteristic shape... I think that decency must come after science." Such a better understanding of life would facilitate a better breeding of "man". "The breeding of horses is a science; the breeding of cattle is a science...but the breed of man has hitherto been allowed to multiply at hap-hazard."

The subordinated are spoken to and spoken for. They are not expected to speak for themselves. They are staged as "living exhibits" of irrationality, entirely unknowable. They represent that "ineluctable difference in which colonial knowledge sought its identification." The subaltern is inassimilable by anthropological science. It ought to be made stubbornly irrational to give legitimacy to the "civilizing mission" of the colonizers. Were the subaltern to be "fully understood or completely appropriated, that would end the "civilizing mission." The subaltern can therefore be present in the discourse of colonial science "as silenced or made to speak only through superstition" on account of ignorance and backwardness (Prakash 2000: 40). The folklorization of the subordinated is a "scientific" necessity for a will to colonize the Other.

Chatterji (2003: 575–80) similarly explains the specific incorporation of the notion of folk by Bengali folklorists in their project of nationalism, in a way that served at the same time as "an exclusionary category demarcating itself from some other entity, such as the westernized urban population, or more commonly the 'primitive' or tribal. The "composite category" of 'Aryanism' "produced by the merging of language, race and culture was by and large used to measure civilization and also to exclude both Muslims and 'pre-Aryan influences in this civilizational history (Dalmia 1997) in the nationalist master narrative though. In contrast to that, the Bengali nationalist folklorists were "able to establish a model by which they could incorporate folk or peasant

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culture into a civilizational perspective. But this was, however, denied to tribal culture; which was seen as fated to disappear as 'primitive' societies crumble under the modernizing offensive." (Chatterji 2003: 579). In one way or the other, folklore as asset of a discourse of community identity implies a discrimination by denying the attributes of civilization to certain societies.

The Indian construction of folk culture followed on the whole two contrasting cognitive paradigms which sometimes blended and gave ground to ambivalent attitudes, especially among the first native folklorists. The convergence of two developments in the 1870s—a new sense of literary history and a public recognition of folklore—repositioned folk tradition as a respected part of indigenous culture and a symbol of a pre-colonial identity. Although ideas linking folklore and the nation were expressed across British India, they were most articulate in the three metropolitan centres (Blackburn 2003: 157). Blackburn (2003b) describes the "intellectual interaction in which European concepts of folklore and the nation influenced British and Tamil scholars in Madras:

> Ideas of a lost antiquity and purity, buried under layers of foreign cultural domination, were inflected through nationalism and Dravidian sensibilities in the 1870s and 1880s in Madras. These Tamil constructions of folklore and the nation were expressed in the language of loss, mixing claims of buried history with forgotten texts and disappearing traditions (Blackburn 2003: 15).

The first phase of Indian folklorism is torn asunder by a profound internal contradiction. Firstly, these folklorists belonged to the educated elite which emerged as a class apart in the first years of the 20th century when the *Indian National Congress* grew as a powerful institution and began in 1901 to hold industrial exhibition to coincide with its annual meetings. Their effort is to distinguish themselves—no less or even possibly more colonized than other natives, but enlightened—from artisans and peasants seen as similar to "the remote barbarians of the Sandwich Islands,"

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but "whose welfare and reform they claimed as their responsibility." Prakash sees this identity coming distinctively "to the fore even earlier, in reactions to the 1883 *International Exhibition* in Calcutta.[7] Secondly, what matters for them in the folk literature is by affinity—most of them are Brahmin by caste—the voice of the dominant. This voice defines the cognitive horizon in which they perform their collection, and its ultimate purpose: strengthen the Hindu community, its morals and *varna* hierarchy. No surprise if some ethnographers' collection reverberates the contempt and repulse of the dominants' voice for lower classes and their untouchability in general.

According to B.N. Tiwari (Tiwari 2000) nationalistic folklorists become active after 1917. Folk literature collection for them meant rediscovering one's own nation which had been lost during British colonial rule, and knowing the inhabitants of their country. Ram Naresh Tripathi (Tripathi 1951: 1-17) is all praise while collecting Kashmiri songs for the financial help received from four rich brothers who "have a deep concern for the growth of *Swadesh* and the Hindu community" (Ibid. 27). It is with the help of such generous people, who were busy strengthening the Hindu community, that Tripathi rediscovered a rural India where he had to talk to 'rustic' and 'dirty' people in order to collect songs. Let us look at some of the expressions he uses: "Chamars would ease themselves in their house itself.... You would find beef cooking on the Chulha and its smell wafting around in the house... Isn't it a matter of great courage to collect songs from such places? (Ibid.: 18)... Till evening, I would note down the songs sitting in the houses of Chamars... At night, I would go and sleep in the house of the Brahmin or a Thakur (Ibid.: 23)... Because of their poverty the women of lower castes have lost their moral character" (Ibid.: 27).

Like most of the renowned folklorists of that period, Pandit Ram Naresh Tripathi as well as Shiv Sahay Chaturvedi (one of the founders of the *Braj Bhasha Academy* in 1940, which published a magazine *Braj Bharat*) were Pandits from Brahmin castes. "They would flaunt, observes B.N. Tiwari, their identity of Pandit on their

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expeditions to collect folklore, even though this would make difficult their interaction with low and untouchable castes." They were all supporters of the *Congress* and inspired by Gandhi's belief that India is a country of villages. Despite their derogatory language about lower castes, they were motivated by a will to build up a nation with the help of the songs that they collected. "With the help of these songs we will inculcate among women a deep faith in *Sati Dharam* (the tradition of Sati)", writes Pandit R.N. Tripathi (Ibid.: 27). Their will of dominant class only matters.

Other committed folk activists did nevertheless exist though they are not recognized in the history of folk literature, such as Mahadev Prasad who collected *Lorikayan, Rani Reshma Chuharmal Ka Geet* and other folk legends in 1938. That other tradition of folklorists which continues today is, collected *Saaranga Sadabriksh, Nal Damayanti, Kunvar Vijayamal, Chuharmal Ki Katha, Sahles Ka Geet,* etc. They were going deep into the rural society and focussed on lower castes. Their cheap booklets were published by Doodnath Press, Loknath Pustakalaya, Calcutta, Gaignat Press, Banaras, Sansar Press Arrah, etc. These collectors were not part of any standardized tradition of collecting folk literature. For them, folk literature was not an intellectual object received from an informant. Collecting folk literature was itself a cultural activity devoted to the life of the people. They were neither the co-workers of an English Sahib nor the *Khaddar Dharis* (a section of people who would wear only cotton clothes out of devotion to *Swadeshi*) influenced by Gandhi who claimed to be exploring *Gram Jivan* (village life).

What is significant to point out at this stage is the common ground of two historical processes. The initially marginalized and degraded position that was assigned to folk communities is turned upside down by an inverse process of valorization which makes traditions of folk communities an asset for claims of community and national identity. Both the processes thrive on the original ambiguity of the idea of folklore herited from the Western eighteenth century folklorists. Trends of traditionalization are only the counterpart of colonial folklorization by a value inversion of

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the same premises. Both of them are the products of a similar "mistaken dichotomy" structurally constitutive of the initial idea and imagery of folklore itself herited from the West. Both rest upon and originate from the heteronomies of folk and civilization, local and universal, bounded communities and expansive societies, marginal or primitive and classical or evolutive, peasant communities and tribes, etc. Ultimately, one may wonder whether the assertion of community identity would not necessarily imply with the claim of some 'original' and 'holistic' cultural essence the closure to and isolation from other communities or groups. The language of folklore seemingly abides by a logic of assertion of Self by discrimination against an Other.

In short, the production of folklore appears as a phenomenon of language constructing a symbolic form of social and national discriminative communication. It starts as soon as a differentiation is made in a given social or cultural context to discriminate between what is called 'folklore' and what is not entitled to this label. The objects to be given the tag 'folklore' vary with the contexts, and in similar contexts with changing times and varying spaces. But the sorting out which signals their having distinctive 'folkloric' qualities is effective of a discursive process of partition. On account of declared discriminative attributes which qualify them to belong to a particular class of cultural objects called 'folklore', their classification apart is justified and performed. This production continues as long as two cultures, one dominant, the other subordinate, coexist with one another.

Folklore and the Nation

The politics of folklorization gives way to traditionalization of politics. In colonial India, in the 1870s, the conflictual encounter of foreign dominance and native resistance prompted to unearth from the past distinctive assets of cultural and social assertion as indubitable grounds of legitimacy for nationalist claims of self-rule, idioms of excellence and evidences to challenge the alien colonial dispensation. Native history, indigenous culture and in particular

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religious traditions were invoked as resources for recovery and foundation of national identity (Prakash 2000: 90-1).

The semantic scheme of the archaic and un-civilized that lies at the root of the colonial rulers' folklore science does similarly model the ambiguous concept of 'folk' of many of the first Indian nationalist folklorists and ethnographers who hurry up to welcome and appreciate the orientalist discourses of westerners valorizing India's Vedic heritage. This justified their search of the roots of the nation in India's antiquity. India appears as an immensely rich reserve of "rudimentary" forms of life, culture and religion. The search for "origin" or "ground," one of the leitmotives which mobilized the first western ethnographers and anthropologists leads Indian nationalists to configure India in their discourse as a holistic and organic national community "by the complex interweaving of nationalism, tradition and regional identity." By the later nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, a new vision of India's past had become in the hands of the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie "an important tool which was used to forge and to reinforce a concept of Indian nationhood that was rooted in its long and antique past and which also shaped its present. The principal features of a mainstream modern, Indian, nationalist version of India's past had acquired a recognizable shape (Chatterjee 1986: 54-84, Dalmia 1997, Chatterjee 1999: 192).

Nowadays, the 'post-modernist' wave repudiates the Enlightenment and ridicules concepts of secularization, rationality and progress (Sarkar 1997: 103-4). Superficial forms of retrograde indigenism feed a modern, yet uprooted and frustrated, intelligentsia with "a vague nostalgia that identifies the authentic with the indigenous, locates both in the pasts of an ever-receding community, or a present that can consist of fragments alone" (Sarkar 1997: 108). The post-modernists belong to a vast middle class, whose most developed members yearn to elevate themselves to a status where they will be

> Sucked into globalizing processes that promise material consumerist dividends at the price of dependency. A binary

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combination of 'material' advancement and 'spiritual' autonomy through surrogate forms of cultural or religious nationalism is not at all uncommon for such groups. Hindutva, with its notable appeal in recent years among metropolitan elites and non-resident Indians, embodies this combination at its most aggressive. (Sarkar 1997: 107).

The Resilience of the Oral

While the folk, oral, cultural traditions acquire their validity as ground of the nation once selected and written down by *literati* as to be worth entering the discourse of the nationalist elite, the living voice and culture of the common man continues to maintain alive local communities. All along the colonization period and its strategies of scientific progress, folk oral customs continue to bind together members of local communities. The English administration with its written codes imposed in the name of universal social regulations does actually induce an uneasy and contrasted relation which prevails in contemporary India at the cross roads where 'orality', 'folk traditions' and 'communication' meet the 'modern' and its codified rules. The differential aspects of both the 'oral' and 'written' cultures appear clearly in the case of legal systems and judicial practices. I shall in this regard profusely quote a recent field study of the Indian legal system by Karine Bates (2003) to show how at the concrete level of every day practices legal system worked in contemporary India as a unique combination of oral traditions, practices and modern values.

In pre-British India, there were many overlapping local jurisdictions. The *Dharmashastra*, a respected ancient system of written law, did not operate as the unifier of the legal system on the territory of what would become the Indian nation. Customs locally circulating through word of mouth were prevailing. And no stigma was attached to their diversity and heterogeneity. Under the Moghuls and other Muslim Rulers, Hindus were generally granted their own tribunals in civil matters. Muslim rulers did not attempt to control the administration of law in the villages, and

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the royal courts did not extend their powers very much in the countryside. Caste *panchayats* (usually consisting of the prominent men of the caste), village *panchayats* and tribal councils served both legislative and judicial functions.

The exclusion of women was common in these institutions. This may serve as a warning to the effect that orality should not be construed as a regime of communicational interaction immune *per se* from power contests and processes of domination. 'Women had little to say either in framing the rules made by these councils or concerning the process by which these rules were enforced. This implies that disputes which involved women were settled by male authorities and male-made rules. There were exceptions, such as the Santal tribals in Uttar Pradesh, where women were allowed to attend tribal council meetings.'

Shastric norms of punishment were not always followed, contrary to British perception of a systematic implementation of traditional Hindu law. Pre-British India had more flexible ways to settle dispute than just applying a written code. For instance, the different sanctions dispensed by the Kotwal's office (in Pune, Maharashtra, in the eighteenth century) may be explained by the fact that the decisions over the sanctions were made according to local practices in the city of Pune. The rulers and the ruled were the same people, operating within the parameters of the value system that was current, which both rulers and ruled tried to understand and interpret. The structure of the fines imposed by the Kotwal to deter crimes was guided by considerations of financial affordability and by factors such as poverty and insolvency. The amount of the fine depended on the financial worthiness of a person and on the principle of the ability to pay. It does not necessarily reflect on the nature of the offense. Cases illustrate the variety of sanctions imposed by the Kotwal as well as the differences between the sanctions established by the ancient *Shastric* texts and the local norms of punishment. The local decision of the Kotwal and the *jatis* do not correspond with the sanctions of the *Shastric* texts. These texts were also subject to interpretation by the Brahman Shastris (scholars of *Dharmashastra*) of Pune. Their views varied strikingly among themselves.

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A study by the historian and anthropologist Anne Waters, based on published extracts[8] from the Peshwa Daftar[9] presents a view of a pre-colonial state of considerable complexity, flexibility and pragmatism in its judgements (Waters 1998). The Peshwa court decisions look very different than the standard academic perception of the "traditional law", which is supposed to be guided by the Sanskritic law of colonial India's Orientalist writings. On the contrary, the Peshwa courts were more concerned with the pragmatic of social problems rather than with following textual prescriptions. The decisions were also a mix of legal prescription and custom.

The British introduced the concept of a modern legal system in India. A modern legal system has the following features: uniform territorial rules based on universalistic norms which link rights and obligations to specific transactions rather than to fixed birth status or caste. The rules have to be administered by a hierarchy of courts where a bureaucracy of professionals employs rational procedures in reference to written codes. There were two distinct, but overlapping, stages of the introduction of modern legal system in India. The first stage was initiated by Warren Hastings who organized a system of courts for the hinterland of Bengal. The expansion of the governments' judicial institutions and the initiation of legislation characterized this period. The second stage began in approximately 1860 with the extensive codification of the law. The sources of law became more fixed and legislation became the dominant means of modifying the law.

During the first period, Hasting's plan assumed that there was a "Hindu" body of law comparable to the English one. This plan took Orthodox Brahmanic learning as the standard of Hindu Law. This implies that the British authority was looking for authoritative texts applied by officials according to specified procedures. Over that period, the British clearly stated that Indians should be ruled by their own laws. Although they realized that there were a multitude of rules and laws governing the Hindus, they insisted on searching for an authoritative body. They made collections and translations of ancient texts and recent commentaries. But the

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Indian law proved to be elusive. Maine speaks of the "vast gaps and interspaces in the substantive law of India." According to this famous British scholar, India was "a country singularly empty of law". Many departments of law were scarcely represented in the written *Shastra.* It was soon acknowledged that *Shastra* only represented one part of the law and that in many matters, Indians were regulated by less formal bodies of customary law. But customary law was not sufficient and they filled the interstices of *Shastra* and custom with "unamalgamated masses of foreign law." Therefore, during that period, the courts judged cases in accordance with justice, equity and good conscience. In most cases, the judges were inclined to assume that the English law was most suitable. Even where Indian rules were available, their application by the British transformed them.

The focus on the written law by the British was different from the Hindu practices because usually in the case of conflict between custom and *Shastra,* custom overrode the written text. The British rules of evidence provided the mechanism for the disappearance of legal effectiveness of much customary law. There were many conditions necessary for a custom to prevail over the written law: the customs must be proven to be immemorial, ancient, uniform, invariable, continuous, certain, notorious, reasonable (or not unreasonable), peaceful, obligatory, not immoral, not opposed to and expressing enactment or public policy.

III
Alternative to Folklorization

The Process of Folklorization

Now, once we have apprehended the production of folklore as a process of demarcation, an analytical distinction is first to be made between folklorization as cultural agency, that is, process of production of knowledge, and folkloric object as substantive

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classification, that is, the folkloric cultural items which is the 'product' of the process.

As cultural product, like any other cultural form which becomes the object of an ethnographic processing, a folkloristic item is actually the subject matter of various kinds of scientific processing which differ indefinitely on many accounts. Each mode of analytical processing and cognitive construction yields a number of insights. But this variety of modalities, constructions and insights turns incongruous the concept of folklore as no multidisciplinary concept can consistently view together this scattered theoretical constructions. There can no longer be any discipline of folklore in human sciences, as we said.

This means that agency folklorization is a pure symbolic operation, a discursive performance, which by placing the tag 'folklore' on particular cultural forms inaugurates particular forms of social relations. Folklore as agency is an event of language as *parole*, whereas folklore as a product is an event of language as *langue* or system of arbitrary signs. Folklorization is an act of speech of social actors intervening in their social and cultural horizon by construing particular forms as folkloric. This social process of floklorization does not take place in a social vacuum. It raises therefore the question about what is sought to be symbolically achieved, within the systems of symbolic communication obtaining in particular society, by the discursive performance which selectively 'folklorizes' cultural forms.

This query signals another significant epistemological shift, actually a theoretical break. When folklore studies concern themselves as human sciences with the qualities of a number of empirical objects of various types, and thus invalidate the attribute itself of 'folklore', they eschew 'folklore' as a discipline. But they live in the shadow, unattended, of folklorization as a social process which still socially continues to exist as ideological performance despite its lack of cognitive legitimacy. Our query thus brings back the attention towards the subjective agency which produces them as classificatory attributes of certain objects. A scientific discipline knows of no substantial qualities which could be found identical

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and distinctively unique in several cultural forms as justifying their specific folkloric essence. Despite endless trials, folklore studies cannot definitely agree upon such an essence. The query is therefore now for that logical performance which explains for the constitution of folkloristic products, irrespective of their being scientifically denied that qualification. Only a political economy of knowledge can and should account for the rule of construction of folkloric cultural forms.

The rule of production of folklore is the same at any point of time as it was at the time of its initial emergence during Enlightenment, in the contentions opposing Rationalism to Romanticism. That rule was a hierarchical dichotomization of cultural forms on the basis of a politically discriminative differentiation of the 'sages' and the 'folk.' The sages are the wise and the learned, the educated and the rulers, the sophisticated and the civilized. The folk are the primitive and the simple, the illiterate and the ruled, the natural and the backward. Rationalism "regarded the folk and its creative, especially literary products with contempt and derision, as lacking in refinement, learning, mastery of diction, and subtleness and elevation of thought. The aristocratic attitude towards folk literature is characteristic of the Rationalist movement (Ben-Amos 1982).

The Romantics did not challenge that basic dichotomy of the "high and low" in literature, the "written and the natural." For Herder the folk of Volkslitterature and *Volkspoesie* were indeed the ruled, that is to say the less educated of the nation itself. But precisely because they had not yet reached a sophisticated level of civilization, they were closer to the natural man. "The slave population of the towns" is the direct opposite of the "naturally good, creative and poetic" people of the European folk-cultures. Herder extolled folk poetry as the highest and finest sandard of all poetry. As the folk are those for whom artificial methods of a written civilization have had less effect, folk literature achieved the highest degree of harmony between the personality and the ethnic environment. This persuasion can be considered as the ground of the traditionalization of politics.

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While reversing the attitudes towards folk literary productions, Romantics do not question the initial dichotomy, which is not based on literature but "in the social basis of learning... Literacy functions as a factor of social differentiation." "The creativity of the illiterate and the literate becomes analogous to their respective social positions" (Ben-Amos 1982). A political will to hierarchical divide used as symbolic form of discriminative social communication, a metaphor which substantiates its objectives of dominance in the realm of cultural productions. The oral forms of the subaltern become inferior to the written form of the literates and their unsophisticated spontaneity is looked down upon as the reason of their want of human civilization. The concept of tradition on the whole is created by modernity as its antithesis of ignorance and rigid dogma.

As a matter of fact, our study of the songs of the grindmill reveals a capacity of metaphorical and musical creativity which belies the ideological *a priori* of the rationalist intellectuals of Enlightment. This nevertheless does not give a credence to the naïve idealization by Herder of the natural man and folk cultures unsullied by science and technology. It does not either justify the tendency of favouring nowadays unilateral interpretations of oral traditions (fairy tales, women's songs, epic metaphors, folktales, folk festivals, ethnic proverbs) as simply spaces of counter-power and metaphorical means of power reversals (Zipes 1979, 1983, Handoo 1999). An elementary critical vigilance will keep us away from the traps of misconceived and misleading representations of folklore.

Eventually, clearing our sight from preconception and misconception, let us appreciate any folk cultural form as a style of thought and speech, a mode of expression and performance, in short a skill or an art devised by the common manfolk or womanfolk to assert himself/herself as a full-fledged subject in his/her own right.

In this regard, two preemptive questions and three general preliminary warnings regarding the idea of people's oral traditions and popular traditions in general may be articulated as initial critical criteria to be kept in mind prior to setting to observe, collect classify, represent and assess.

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First question: This art, on which ground and in which respect do we construe it is different? Different from what?

Second: From where, that is, from which distinct position or in which capacity, do we set to analyse it and make evaluations? Our response preempts our search and findings. The questions represent the two faces of one and the same political economy of knowledge. Possibly, while apprehending from within the very procedures of this art, shall we come to definitely give way to folklore, deny cognitive competence to folklorists, and explore alternative ways and means of a democratic cognitive politics.

First warning. Does folklore exist otherwise then as a *quid pro quo*, a makeshift, an alibi? Does folklore exist elsewhere than in the act which misses, hides or remodels its own reality, in a way homologous to the way de Certeau (1993) sees popular cultures actually existing only through the act which denies them an existence of their own, that is, simply as human cultures? According to de Certeau, the "popular" seemingly raises interest when its dangers are eliminated or its magnificence displayed as a dream of wonder in the past, namely, in both the cases, once its historical substance has been subdued or converted into something else, by some one else, for something else. "Popular cultures" come to scientific existence among the elite classes and operate in the modern world under the cognitive mode of alienation. Popular cultures apparently ought first to be the object either of social censorship and alien cognitive judgement or of enthusiastic glorification to become the subject matter of a scientific investigation.

The lesson to be drawn is clear. Bracketing the fixed sets of representations of the category of 'folklore' in the learned discourses of cultural elites, we have to focus on the versatile voices and practices of the vast majority of people—simply the common man. While cognitive strategies tend to convert them into a wishful 'other', manipulate their words into an inert folkloric corpus and turn a cultural elite blind to what it excludes, we have to find our way towards the living consciousness in itself and for itself of the common man.

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Second warning. Can we think of a novel organization within culture which would not be dependent upon a change in the power relations of social forces but free from power equations? This is precisely what the historian may point out to the folklorists when they posture as self-appointed and self-authorized analysts of culture. The historian's function is to chase the latter out of an alleged status of pure, detached spectators through showing them everywhere the presence of social mechanisms of choice, criticism, repression or aggrandisement. We are reminded that it is violence which always gives knowledge its ground (Certeau 1993). Colonial folklore science partook of the ruling practices of the colonial rulers.

Third warning. A countervailing political will should consist in unearthing the nature and means of the active alterity of people's voice and will (Poitevin 2002) against the passive otherness in which the "folklorization of difference" confines them as inert, conspicuously silent, 'objectified' as 'animal' (let us remember Campbell's embarrassed denial of treating tribals as animals) or purely physical object, primitive and savage residues (Certeau 1975). This directs the attention towards people's effective capacity, within their actual historical context, to articulate, in various forms of oral traditions, representations of their own.

The Imperium of Writing

Speech and writing considered in themselves as practices, techniques or modes of communication irrespective of any of their entertwined historical configurations are significantly distinct practices. They cannot be subsumed under a third term as two species of the same genre. No functional homology. But the anomaly is that the differential assessment of both the practices can hardly remain an objective appraisal. In western cultural configurations, orality is defined relatively to all definite writing systems as that which stands out of them as their indefinite residual leftover. Script means linearity, coherence and self-disciplined mental operation. It aims at cognitive construction, cultural

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production, social dominance and political (economic and administrative) management. Writing eventually aims at effectiveness through instrumentalization of techniques of all kinds—mental, social, physical, scientific, etc. Orality is subordinate, inert, expressively redundant and cognitively opaque (Vernant 1988 196-200). The constitutive distinction which differentiates writing from orality in western historical configurations mainly since the seventeenth century but with roots in the thirteenth century when symbolic cognitive systems were set aside, consists essentially in referring to a reality (oral popular traditions) from which writing has been distinguished in order to transform it.

In the XVIIIth century, the French Revolution is highly exemplary in this respect: the written word was the self-declared indicator of power used by the so called enlightened bourgeoisie, a tool "to make history" in the hands of one particular social category. The century of he Enlightenment marks the reign of normative standardization through writing. The essential breakthrough of the written form is firstly a process of universalization and generalization of laws, rules, and norms. Secondly, it is the confiscation of authority and power by the 'literate', that is to say 'educated' elites with corresponding mechanisms of formalization of human relations. By implication, this means the marginalization of the individual who can rely only on the strength of his spoken word. The one who is only the accountable author of his speech finds himself in one way or the other rid, of, dispossessed or robbed of his words.

Writing plays on instrumental exteriority. Script is a laboratory device with a strategical function. Information received from outside oral traditions which is collected, classified, processed through systems of interpretation on the basis of the letter (written characters; philology eventually supersedes rhetoric). The latter recompose and structure the former. The result is a scriptural product affected by all the marks of the imprint process. These marks show the power of transformation of the writer, a writer bent on "writing history," that of yesterday as well as that of tomorrow.

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Written history is constructed as an independent narrative that directs and commands future actions aloof from the past traditions hitherto passively received. Script meets a will not to listen any more to what is spoken but to manage, reprocess, re-do and conquer. Script is born from a distance put between the spoken words and oneself appearing in a new role, that of an alien subject prompted by a will to power through accumulation of the past in order to modify it as per one's own models. Reappropriation, capitalization and conquest are the attributes of the script to the service of states and hegemonic classes.

The elites use writing and impose their social and cultural control through 'scriptures' (in the religious sphere), constitutions (political sphere), judicial codes (civil society), legislative texts (national identity), standard codes of communication (language, symbolic and ritual forms). All these codes are vested with a universal and compelling value. The written word is synonym to homogenization of norms imposed on all through the control of classes of *literati.*

On a religious level, the written word gives those religions which are transmitted through written documents (scriptures) a universal and ethical character. This differs from other religions that remain rather local, national and ethnic. The latter are considered for the same reasons 'primitive,' 'pagan' (originally 'rustic', that is to say from the 'peasant,' that is, the countryside as opposed to the culture of the 'urban' in towns), 'backward,' 'superstitious' (Bhatti 2000: 9), and called to accomplish themselves in religions of the scriptures. Written religions are therefore generally proselyte and not religions into which one is born. The written word privileges dogmas. It also establishes restricted references of belonging and orthodoxy much like when borders are drawn on maps for demarcation of nationalist divides. The written word demands conversion and produces the faithful and the dissident as the borders drawn on map produce potential enemies. Through the written word, truth takes on a different meaning because the official scriptures become the reference and no longer the experience of individuals or human beings.

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On a judicial level, laws replace customs and justice is associated with a written code of law. Documented evidence (in writing) acquires greater value than oral testimony. The written word certifies and legitimizes. It guarantees property. It permits the substitution of texts in place of reality. Since then, all petitions and requests must be furnished in writing and civil servants' promises, unless laid down in black and white, are easily denied. The simple word of a poor man vanishes in the wind while the authorities become unaccountable for their words.

The relevance and extent of the difference which opposes the spoken oral traditions and their written textual refabrication may further be stressed in reference to three typical sets of socio-cultural processes of domination and repression. They can be distinctively articulated as follows:

First, with regard to the mode of transmission, the written tends to overwrite the oral, the script turns the speech obsolete, the print puts the voice aside, the text obliterates the body, the language makes the gesture redundant. This results in putting at a distance the living body (traditional and individual) and therefore also all that in the people remains bound to the soil, to a place, to orality, to the body (Certeau 1990: 205).

Secondly, with regard to the carriers, the educated agent represses the illiterate vulgar. Learning to write in school is the initiation *par excellence* into a progressive, capitalist and developing society. Modelling of a modern child is essentially achieved by scriptural proficiency. Literacy increasingly becomes the basic asset of social hierarchy and discrimination and imparts all privileges nowadays to the technocrats as yesterday to the 'bourgeois'.

Thirdly, with regard to the gender parameter, the written remains often a prerogative of the male as one more asset to overpower the female. Accordingly, women literacy allegedly becomes the key factor of women's uplift and liberation (in the image of men's ascendancy).

It is unfortunate that claims of authenticity for popular indigenous traditions against modern, dominant or elaborate traditions are often just counterclaims against the 'mythical' value

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given for the last four hundred years to the practice of writing (Certeau 1990: 198-199). Progress is of a scriptural kind. To produce text is to produce society as text. Orality is therefore defined, in many different ways, as what a 'legitimate'—scientific, political, educational, etc.—practice should distinguish itself from. 'Oral' is what does not work for progress; reciprocally, 'scriptural' is what separates itself from the magic world of voices and tradition. This explains the importance granted to literacy and the disdain held against those with no knowledge of the alphabet. In common parlance, those who ignore the alphabet are considered illiterate as if they were deprived of the letters of the language that they speak. Still at the same time we would classify their oral performances as pieces of oral 'literature' whenever we deem them fit to compare with established literary canons.

Orality, a Space of Democracy

An alternative economy of knowledge may easily stem from the dimension of orality of people's traditions. At variance with the discriminatory construction of the category of folklore by early folklorists through a unilateral, imperial diktat of a 'civilized' intelligentsia, British and dominant native classes, people's traditions suggest another democratic economy of knowledge which invents and circulates symbolic forms through many channels of free exchange. People's traditions open a democratic political arena. If dominance spreads through 'literality', democracy stems from 'orality' (Poitevin 200b: 14-5).

Two caveats would be in order at the outset. The identification of 'highbrow', 'classical,' 'elitist' and 'normative' as 'written', opposed to 'rustic,' 'popular,' and 'folk' as 'oral' is a frequent simplistic categorisation leading to wrong stereotyped classifications. Highbrow tradition may be orally transmitted, and written texts may incorporate and carry large components of popular traditions as well (for instance the Puranas in India). The question of elitist domination of one tradition over another one is different from that of their modes of transmission. Nevertheless, elitist traditions have

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more often than not constructed, maintained and legitimized their ideological dominance through the authority of written texts (Goody 1977, 1986, 1994). Conversely, a number of oral popular traditions stand as free alternative speech in front of these dominant traditions. Therefore, the assumption of a basic clash between dominant and popular traditions, each of them claiming authenticity and legitimacy with reference to or in account of, a particular mode of transmission—respectively in writing and by word of mouth— may often and to a great extent historically prove to be a workable hypothesis.

Moreover one should steer clear of the mythic dream of a "Graal of orality" (Certeau 1990: 195-200): No People's Voice can be retrieved as the carrier of a purely oral alternative culture. People's voices appear rather as threads deeply woven into the intricate network of writing systems, and now enforced visual systems

> We do not believe any more as did Grundtvig (or Michelet) that behind the gates of our cities, in the remote proximity of our countryside, stretch vast poetic and 'pagan' grazing lands where would still speak out songs, myths and that proliferating rumor of the *folkelighed* (this word cannot be translated because its French equivalent, 'popularity', has already been devalued by the use that we made of it, though it is in relation to 'people' the analogous of 'nationality' to 'nation'). These voices are only to be heard within the scriptural systems where they stage their entry. They circulate, dance and just call in, in the field of the other.

Oral traditions create a public space of symbolic communication where speech becomes an institution to argue and convince, a ground to agency, a mode of decision and a social means of symbolic connection. The tripartite structuration of communication as process pursuing three goals: articulate, express and convince implies that this adjustment cannot rest upon the imperium of the letter but the capacity to convince through speech. Against all processes of dominance, speech opens a space for democracy.

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Democracy is a matter of respect and faith in the validity of the spoken world, attitudes which lie at the ground of living oral traditions and the boundedness of human communities. It is an attempt to resort against violence to persuasion through rules of speech discipline and modes of argumentation themselves subject to scrutiny. Democracy means constant adjustment and collective assessment of viewpoints through communicative practices against the spell and enforcement of "dead lines" and "death letters." Oral language remains local and spontaneous. Everyone has equal access to it. Everyone is free to seize and utilize the language in his won way to speak out his mind and express himself. If the written word is an argument of strength of the powerful then the spoken word is an asset of counter-power for the weak and the humble. The strength and resilience of people's traditions partake of the democratic power of a regime of orality.

Oral Traditions, Assets of an Alternative Economy of Knowledge

The regime of orality as simultaneously a mode of production and exchange of knowledge turns oral traditions into assets of an alternative political economy of knowledge for the reason that they exist to the extent they stand as events of speech. We many not always fully appreciate the importance of this essential dimension, hypnotized as we are by the Gutenberg culture of the written. People's oral traditions are cultural forms which are contemporaneous to their performance, that is to say, to a practice of exchange within a given system of symbolic communication in a definite temporal and spatial context of a given society. If the *langue* is indeed the most pregnant system of signification, any oral traditions rightly deserve for this reason a particular attention as an act of speech addressed to some one that makes sense and transmits it in the moment of the performance. The political dimension of speech is very much a core dimension of any oral tradition. What we need is an intelligence of folklore as a people's distinctive political economy of knowledge, the true alternative to politics of folklorization of the same traditions. How to qualify it?

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First of all, aware of the misdeeds associated with the term of folklore, and to eschew them, I find advisable to find another term and rid definitely of the term 'folklore' since its use definitely departs from a scientific category. The word is too much discredited by its constitutive historical acquaintance in India with an episteme of dominance and discrimination on the part of the rulers as well as of the 'natives.' I would suggest the term of "speaking memory."

In this perspective, the "primitive belief and custom" of the colonial and nationalist folklorists of India cannot be pure relics or dead records, about performances at a given moment in time of a speaking memory. Folk traditions may look archaic with regard to other cultural forms deemed higher by a dominant culture. They may even be doomed irrational, superstitious, wild and "foulest myths" as those of "early India" (Lang 1995) by the latter's representatives. This politically motivated cognitive judgement passed on cultural forms says nothing about these forms as moments of a memory speaking through symbolic forms of communication which carry a significance and fulfil a particular social function at that moment.

We may already argue that, were they anachronic vestiges, their carriers would not bother to retain them. The collective memory and ritual practice of the group keep them alive because they meet its needs and perform functions which maintain alive the community in its physical and mental environment, and in continuity with itself. By nature they partake of the present of a collective. They cannot be simply looked at as an out-of-time and out-of-place remnant.

Secondly, were they deprived of reason, they would not be retained as means of symbolic exchange by the community. They may not make sense to aliens only—whom they do not address anyway—but the forms of rationality are as multiple as the various cognitive strategies devised by men to explore, order and rule over the different physical and social realms of reality. Reason is plural. Let us get ourselves rid of the illusion of one single universal and unchangeable reason, that of the Enlightenment.

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The living oral tradition of the grindmill songs is emblematic in this respect. Handed down from generation to generation it subsists among peasant women as meaningful means and milieu of symbolic communication (Rairkar 1993). Had this tradition lost its functions, it would have simply disappeared, falling out of its performers' time, memory and history. It might have possibly survived in some rare written documents only but for nobody to remember them; and nowhere to be found except in archives, as inert remainders. They would have become mere object of archaeological or historical documentation or piece of museum. But they would have definitely ceased to be a lore—knowledge—of any living folk. They would then only stand forever as souvenir of faraway times, distant places or alien communities, but not as folklore which cannot be a dead relic. A few such stagnant grindmill songs, for instance, can be found lying in the Bibliothëque Nationale, Paris where they are kept as a tangible souvenir of a scholarly journey undertaken in a country of foreign literatures by a representative of French literary clubs in the eighteenth century. Our concern, here and now, for the oral tradition of grindmill songs—and not their written text—is different: we study the tradition of these songs as an intangible heritage alive in the speaking/singing memory of Indian peasant women to whom it makes sense no less today than yesterday. We know how these women inherit with pride and own with a purpose their ancestral, cultural capital. They are ready moreover to share it as a constitutive moment of the experience of their present condition as woman. This reappropriation takes place indeed in significantly changed circumstances, and new challenges are faced on the strength of past cultural resources.

The term of speaking memory suggests three constitutive modes of production and exchange of knowledge, namely, repetition, variation and collective creativity. These specific parameters of a speaking memory as faculty of cognitive innovation make oral traditions assets of an alternative political economy of knowledge. By pointing to incessant processes of reappropriation as essential dimension of oral tradition/transmission of knowledge

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nobody but in the name of political will to dominance, can ever look for and advocate an originally fixed and normative cultural form of the reason that no oral cultural form can ever exist as an immutable code. It exists to be handed down as a heritage to be freely owned if found appropriate and relevant at that moment by a community. Its themes are factors of continuity in the midst of historical transformations as their intelligibility and meaningfulness relate to the symbolic needs of different audiences. Changing circumstances cannot but lead to changes in meanings through incessant connotative fluctuations and possibly contrasting interpretations. People "produce meanings, they exchange messages" as per their perceptions in given contexts. "There is no master form for any folklore product" (Honko 1999).

Anthropologists observe that, contrary to what is generally taken for granted, in societies without script memory is not a word for word transmission. It operates with variations, and mnemonic procedures happen to be rare. A word for word repetition is even rarely perceived as necessary. It comes to exist to the extent that learning depends upon reading and writing. Societies without script grant more freedom to the living memory. As a consequence the variability is an essential structuring feature of oral narrative traditions. In societies with no writing, the operational modality of knowledge production appears to be "a generative reconstruction" and not a mechanical memorizing. The modalities of knowledge transmission in oral regimes of communication opens the way wide towards a democratic economy of cognitive innovation.

The relation of the scientist to the people's oral traditions places similarly the scientist in a condition of intercultural interaction and creativity; it gives a new lease of life to traditions. The scientist himself becomes part of the tradition by listening and interpreting it in his/her own physical and symbolic environment. An oral tradition is for him like any other people's voice. His/her insight, interpretation and rendering in another language is simply his/her particular reaction in another spatial and temporal context. The oral tradition has only got another audience and

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reaches outside of the initial boundedness of the community that it created. It thus tends to become part of the universal by addressing its other, provided to other welcomes it as the same as himself/herself in humanity.

We cannot indeed but recognize the 'folkloric' 'Other' as a part of the 'We' and of a universal knowledge about man (Wallerstein 1997: 57). Every one of us is called to find oneself in the "otherness" of these oral records emerging from another time and space. If the very object of human science constructs itself through a process of self-comprehension, the human subject can best find a way towards this self-comprehension through the roundabout course of the traditions of meanings of these "others." Oral traditions of the "others" prove to be assets of a hermeneutics of the subject:

> If social science is an exercise in the search for universal knowledge, the "other" cannot logicallly exist, for the 'other" is part of "us"—the us that is studied, the us that is engaged in studying (Wallerstein 1997: 57).

We have reached the end of folklorism though its avatar, exotism, may stay with us for long. Both of them remain a constant possibility because they point to a puzzling aporia which shall remain forever at the heart of the anthropologist's work with never any easy answer, namely, that of the conditions of a legitimate meeting with and genuine insight of the other without exotism and will to dominate or discriminate. Can the other be not exotic? How to address the other as oneself?

I shall conclude with a remark that may suggest a way. The fact is that all along the history of the Indian sub-continent, there have been constant processes of interaction, reciprocity of borrowings and exchange resulting in the strengthening of singular identities thanks to their interbreeding, and not in loss of self-consciousness and identity. Tribal, nomadic and peasant communities did not stand isolated from one another let alone survive against one another. Academic or categorical separations do not reflect these

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historical processes of linkages and transitive exchange. The same is the case with the separation between urban and rural communities, today which is no less than yesterday. Continuum, imbrication and mutual implication should guide our observation, insight and policies against any will to discriminate and separate or on the contrary homogenize and erase. Mutual exchange at par is the democratic remedy to unilateral and discriminative politics of folklorization.

Notes

1. The theme of an Indo-French seminar held at Paris on October 29–30, 2003 was, for instance, "Past as the Present, A Discourse on South Asian Society."
2. This approach is embedded on the one hand in a theory which construes 'the social' as 'the symbolic' (Poitevin, forthcoming) and makes no difference from this point of view between 'traditional' and present modes of oral communication; and on the other hand on a purely descriptive or enumerative notion of folklore. I substantively focus only on what is commonly understood by 'folklore,' namely, oral traditions from the past without giving any disciplinary status to the term Poitevin 2003b).
3. "The Presidential speech to the *Folklore Society* in London in 1900 for instance advocated the 'empire theory' of folklore, according to which an awareness of native lore was helpful to an efficient administration of the colonies. Three years later, the *Linguistic Survey of India* was established with Sir George Grierson, a veteran folklorist administrator, in charge (Blackburn 2003b: 13).
4. Civil servants and missionaries had already come to India in the early years of the nineteenth century and brought with them European ideas. As soon as the first half of the century, for instance in Madras in the 1820s, they encouraged the publication of folklore material primarily tales and proverbs for language learning and schools; biographies and anthologies of poets started appearing, such as the *Biographical Sketches of Dekkhan Poets* (1829) in Calcutta. Besides anthologies of verses and historical writings, actually hagiography, mainly in Marathi, Bengali and Tamil, ethnological publications

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appear, such as Todd *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829), Stephen Hislop's *Papers Relating to the Aboriginal Tribes of the Central Provinces* (1866), and journals such as *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1832, *Madras Journal of Literature and Science* (1822–66). But it is not until the 1870s that folklore stood established in India as a cultural category and a corresponding field research. 'Folklore' had first to "emerge from indecent tales and improbable legends into a more credible source for constructing cultural identity" (Blackburn 2003: 153–5).

5. At the centre of that development and putting "folklore into the public domain in India" is James Burgess' *Indian Antiquary* launched at Bombay in 1872 with a special focus on prose narratives and popular songs. But the scope of the journal stated on page 1 of the first issue "reads like a contemporaneous definition of folklore in Europe:" Manners and Customs, Arts, Mythology, Feasts, Festivals and Rites, Antiquities and History." Burgess stresses also that the journal would be "a medium of communication between Archaeologists in the East and West" (Blackburn 2003b: 156). The *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay* follows in 1886. Mary Frere publishes in 1868 *The Old Deccan Days*, the very first true collection of Indian folktales, followed by *Indian Fairy Tales* by Miss Stokes. During the same period an impressive number of books published Indian-language collections of "tales and fables" in Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Urdu and Hindi. Major collections of Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, etc. tales and proverbs are published in English.
6. Richard Carnac Temple held various military and civil appointments. Besides essays on folklore method and theory in the *Folklore Society's* journal, and his serving for some years as co-editor of the *Indian Antiquary*, his three-volume *Legends of the Punjab* (1884–1900) and journal *Punjab Notes and Queries* (1863–7) had a determinant influence. William Crooke who served in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh wrote and edited several Books, the most influential being his two-volume *An Introduction to the Popular Religion and Folklore of Northern India* (1894) and his journal *North Indian Notes and Queries* (1891–6).
7. The daily *Bengalee* welcomed the idea of an exhibition, acknowledged that it could be instructive" though it "ignored the character of the people it was aimed at". "These barbarians," states the newspaper in November 17, 1883 "even if their curiosity were deeply stirred, and their inclinations moved, would be wanting the capital to

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manufacture... Nothing solid or substantial" can follow from such exhibition (Prakash 2000). Museums and exhibitions, in their view, chiefly provide amusement to the "lower classes", "unfortunate souls" who have still "a great taste" for traditional theatre and dances. Paradoxically the first Indian nationalist folklorists emerge from this enlightened class and collect traditions and narratives from people whom they consider "living in darkness."

8. Extracts from the Peshwa Daftar in *Judicial System of the Marathas* (Gune 1953), *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar volume 43, Selections from the 'Satara Rajah's and Peshwa's Diaries* (Vad et al. 1908), and the edited book of *Social and Religious Matters under the Peshwas* (1727–1797) (Sardesai 1934).
9. The Peshwa Daftar is a product of British colonial order. The British seized Peshwa's records and used them to create a central archive for documents from the previous overlords. By controlling the knowledge of the past, they were able to reinterpret religious customs, legal systems, agricultural practices and taxation policies. The records do not present a full description of legal cases. The general characteristics of the documents are that they consist of a summary of the decision accompanying the receipt of a fine (Waters 1998: 4) and a formulaic agreement to pay the fine (*karar kela*) and sometimes an agreement to perform penance of other rituals. The sentences are often incomplete and the description often consists of a string of phrases. The documents also state the names of key individuals that are often named in familiar and relational terms.
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Existentialist Aesthetics

Emergence of Existentialist Aesthetics is not a result of any systematic or preplanned effort. It has been formed by weaving together several stray threads. Besides the hints found in the works of Kierkegaard and Neitzsche, assimilation of different postulates of the modern Existentialists has constituted its fabric. With this point of view several postulates of the Neo-Existentialists—as for example, Camus' 'Absurd', Hiedegger's 'Befindlichkeit', Jaspers' 'Transcendence', Marcel's 'Hope' and Sartre's 'Nausea'—are very important. It is a speciality of Existentialist Aesthetics that it has unified thought and creation whereas the exponents of traditional aesthetics have differentiated thought and action and raised an apparition wall between the artist and the thinker. In fact, existentialism has not come into literature from philosophy, as a philosophical thought or a school of philosophy. It is the peculiarity of Existentialism that the Existentialist concept first emerged in creative literature and then it became a specific trend of thought in Philosophy. In other words, Existentialism appeared first in creative literature. Hence its affiliation with Philosophy of art and literature with the basic questions of aesthetics, is but natural. Consequently, the Existentialist thinkers, who are dissatisfied or who are in disagreement with Kant's and Hegel's tenets of art, have tried to think on the basic postulates of aesthetics in absolutely new terms, setting aside the traditional verbal jugglery. They have considered literature and art, along with allied concepts, worth speculating about like abstruse philosophical questions.

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There are several thinkers who do not vouchsafe any sign of heterodox novelty in Existentialist Aesthetics. For example, Herbert Read connects Existentialist Aesthetics with Romantic Aesthetics. In his view, the Existentialist Aesthetics is a slightly changed mode of Romantic sensibility and aesthetic consciousness. He goes to the extent of saying that all the basic postulates found in Existentialist Aesthetics already exist in the thoughts of Shelley and Coleridge. But in my opinion, to prove that Existentialism or Existentialist Aesthetics is a scion, off-spring or carbon copy of the Romantic Aesthetics, is yoking together of two separate and far-fetched concepts or things.

The Existentialist Aesthetics is based on Existentialist ontology. Existentialist Aesthetics too, is basically individualistic and it is an incessant investigation, through the medium of art-creation and its analysis into the significance of existence. According to Existentialist Aesthetics, the aim of art is investigation of the significance of existence, and for that matter, spontaneous delineation of the deep inner world of the individual. Its chief object is filling up the "cleavages of existence". Consequently, the Existentialist Aesthetics assesses a work of art by the degree and manner of its investigation into the significance of existence, its delineation of the deep inner world of the individual and its close portrayal of the life-world evincing existence. The fact is that according to the Existentialist, it is existence which induces the individual to action. Lack of existence engenders inaction. So, for the Existentialist, existence alone is the crux or the epicentre of the entire investigation.

In the development of Existentialist Aesthetics, Kierkegaard and Sartre hold important places, for one gives it a well-marked beginning and the other a settled culmination. Kierkegaard correlates the perception of beauty with that of aesthetic existence which, in his specific terminology, is the "first sphere". In the theory of triple existence spheres, expounded by Kierkegaard, "spheres" stands for "mode". Thus according to Kierkegaard, beauty-perception too is a sort of "existence-sphere" or "mode of existence". Hence, the entire aesthetic thinking of Kierkegaard is

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pivoted on this "existence-sphere" or "mode of existence-spheres" or "mode of existence". According to Kierkegaard, there are three spheres of existence—aesthetic sphere, ethical sphere and religious sphere. In respect of order and scope, the aesthetic sphere, though lowest, is the most pervasive among these and the religious sphere is the highest. The above-mentioned three spheres of existence are respectively dominated by pleasure, action and sensation. In this context, Kierkegaard has pointed out that the aesthetic sphere is the most pervasive element of existence-universe. Hence, even on the ethical and religious planes of existence, the aesthetic element does not altogether disappear. According to Kierkegaard, the aesthetic element, inherent in the mode of existence is deeply related to the inner world (inner welt) of the man and not to the outer world. Perhaps it is on account of attaching comparatively more importance to the inner world that among the elements connected with art, Kierkegaard had assigned a very high position to passion and has considered it an essential constituent of existence-perception. Here it should be noted that the aesthetic theory of Kierkegaard, like that of Hegel, is not supersensual or metaphysical but empirical. This empirical tendency is found in entire Existentialist Aesthetics. Yet it is certain that Existentialist Aesthetics will gradually tend towards the metaphysical, because, tending towards metaphysics is, as if, the destiny of aesthetics. Another fact is that Kierkegaard, in the exposition of his aesthetic theory, has not taken "being" as the starting point of his speculations; undoubtedly, he is drawn towards "becoming". Though, this conclusion is not beyond controversy, because, all the Existentialists, somehow or other lay emphasis on "being".

As far as Sartre is concerned, he has given to the Existentialist Aesthetics a settled culmination. Directly on aesthetics, Sartre has not written much. But in his works, specially the novels and the speculative writings, tenets of aesthetics are so many that they cannot be set aside. Nevertheless in his essays collected under the title "Essays in Aesthetics", several of his well-established tenets in respect of Existentialist Aesthetics are found at one place. In the publisher's preface of this book it has been claimed that it is the

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manifesto of Existentialist Aesthetics. But in my opinion this book is not a well-planned treatise on aesthetics. It is just a collection of essays written independently on some artists, which before appearing in the book form had already been published in Sartre's literary magazine—*Les Temps Moderns.* Another limitation of this book is manifested in the fact that all the inferences of Sartre are based on his discussion on sculpture and painting, though these inferences have been imposed on all fine arts and passed for aesthetic judgements. None of the four artists, discussed here is a representative poet or man of literature. In this way the said book has several limitations. But inspite of all these, it has conspicuously contributed towards strengthening Existentialist Aesthetics. The most important fact is that Sartre has, for the first time, introduced social consciousness in Existentialist Aesthetics. Otherwise Existentialist Aesthetics would have remained an abstract philosophy of arts, averse to social consciousness. But later Sartre added a new dimension to Existentialist Aesthetics. In fact, by accepting the social context as the background of his social discussions, Sartre has taken a progressive step in the field of Existentialism. By demanding freedom for Algeria, by opposing the American military invasion of Vietnam and refusing the Nobel Prize in 1965, Sartre tried to come out of the cobweb of Individualistic Existentialism and he extended moral support to the progressive thoughts of his time. An indirect influence of this intellectual revolt or leap is perceivable in his essays on philosophy of arts and in his independent creative writings of the last phase., That is why, though an Existentialist, Sartre has linked the beautiful to the good, inspite of the fact that the original habitat of Existentialism is the inner world and individuality. I do not mean to say that Sartre has deserted the original home of Existentialism. In formulating the tenets of aesthetics, Sartre has given considerable importance to 'fear', 'terror' and 'despair' and this is quite in keeping with his Existentialist concepts. This is why he was attracted by such artists even, who considered the arts to be an 'absurd activity'—such absurd activity which contains nothing except expression of nihility, despair, terror and fury of destiny.

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Leaving aside the social relevance hinted at by Sartre, Existentialist Aesthetics gives importance mainly to individual peculiarity and self-experience. Hence it fosters the content connected with the 'specific' man and not with the 'institutional' man. According to this, art-creation is possible only through personal feelings and empirical concepts. Impersonal feelings and imaginary concepts are barren in respect of art-creation. True experience is personal and temporal. The individual, who experiences a particular moment at a particular time in a particular manner, can alone do so in that manner at that time and none else. The Existentialist Aesthetics considers this uniqueness—this being like itself, of the moment, its experience and the individual as the mainstay of art-creation. We know that, in respect of experiencing a moment, the individual is not always governed by reason, nor does he abide by the dictates of the objective truth and the societal factors. From the above postulate, it follows that the Existentialist Aesthetics considers the aesthetic order to be different from the rational and the objective one. This point of view, certainly establishes the importance of subjective spontaneity in art and shows that every subject matter of art is, in respect of its perceiver, a symbol of release from the bond of existence. Consequently, the subject matter of Existentialist art is not Ram, Krishna, Christ or Gautam—The Buddha, or any such other traditional character or religious Lord. It is entirely different from the traditional and mythological ones. It is related neither to any absolute truth, or the so-called highly ideal, nor to any desire of the other world. The subject matter of Existentialist art is only a reflection of the artist's personal inspiration, discontent and insignificance of existence, because, according to the Existentialist, art is a realistic portrait of our miserable inner world 'weltschmerz' and the painful surroundings. Being a realistic portrait, the Existentialist art acts for us only as a mirror and not as a lamp. It simply puts before us the life-in-the-world as it is. Here it has to be noted that Existentialist artists do not intend to make the art a lamp. According to them, art is only an aesthetic transformation of real experiences. Therefore, reality alone (and it is not

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necessary that what is real for one individual should be so for all others) furnishes the basis of art. Imagination only embellishes and colours it. Along the same line, another belief of Existentialism is that for the individual, the significance of the world is relative to life. After death, for the dead, there is no significance of this world. In fact, each individual has a strange and unavoidable relation with death. Each individual is linked with Death since his or her birth. With the breath of time, Death keeps knocking at the door of each individual's life. Willing or not willing, after birth, each man has to remain always ready for death. In this way the Existentialists hold that the line of death having been drawn, this significant world becomes insignificant for the dead. Or, for every individual, his life-context is essential for proving the significance of this world. Hence, the Existentialist Aesthetics gives importance to those art-experiences only which are filtered through the life-context of the individual and thus become realities for him. Inspite of this insistence on reality, in the view of Existentialist Aesthetics, talk of embellishment or colouring by imagination is not useless. Therefore, Existentialist Aesthetics postulates that only such reality which is dipped or set in experience and imagination, becomes "actual". The reality which is not illumined with the light of experience and imagination, or which is bereft of experience and imagination, can never be "actual"; for reality has to be aided by imagination to become actuality. This is a fanciful concept of the Existentialist Aesthetics.

From this self-contradictory view on reality and imagination, it is evident that on the issue of reality and imagination Existentialist Aesthetics is confused. On the one hand, in their creative literature, the Existentialists have shown predilection for the rugged realities of life and its tragedies. On the other hand, on the plane of aesthetic values, they have not given due importance to reality. For example, Sartre, talking about beauty, has written, "The real is never beautiful". Beauty is a value applicable only to the imaginary. Explaining this aphorism Sartre says that the pleasure derived from beauty is real, but, the things employed by the artist as constituents of beauty are unreal. Sartre considers this fact to be

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the basis of "disinterestedness" so frequently talked about in the orthodox analysis of beauty-perception, and quotes Kant's view in this regard to corroborate his stand. According to Sartre every work of art is an external "analogue" of the images formed in the mind of the artist at the time of creation. This analogue or "objective correlative" takes shape according to types and forms of fine arts. For example, it is material in painting and verbal in poetry.

The Existentialists spreading a net of words, have almost concealed this fact that art is not sheer imitation or reflection of the real. In fact, significance of art lies in the revelation of truth, and not in the mere portrayal of the real.

As far as aesthetic sincerity in art-creation is concerned, the Existentialist Aesthetics is quite clear on this point. It considers aesthetic sincerity as essential for art. The art, which lacks aesthetic sincerity, is futile. According to the Existentialists, the artist develops in his nature, this aesthetic sincerity, by suffering the chequered experience of life. Only such an artist has aesthetic sincerity in his art, who expresses the experiences of his life without any concealment.

Inclination of Existentialist Aesthetics towards reality has also affected its philosophy of time. In the context of "aesthetic factum" its Philosophy of time is very much realistic, it is attached to the present. It prefers to see that the moments depicted in art are free from the past and the future contexts. Perhaps, that is why in painting it gives importance to the portrayal of "still life". In this way trying to confine time within the bounds of the present alone—and disregard the past and the future among the usual threefold divisions of time—is a noteworthy peculiarity of the Existentialist perception of time. But one can imagine what that present will be like which is ungrateful to the past and averse to the future. The fact is that there is an affirmation in every negation. Therefore, negation of a thing or a concept implies a covert and indirect affirmation of what that thing or concept implies. With this point of view we can say that the Existentialist Aesthetics does not deny the past and the future, it wants to unify

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entire time in the present, if the present includes both past and future. The consequence of these attachments with the present is that the Existentialist Aesthetics happens to consider every work of art as topical. The work of art, which is not basically alive to its time, can never rise to excellence. Or, it would be more correct to say that the appreciation of work of art cannot remain unaffected by the "climate of the age".

After having raised the controversial issue of the mirror and the lamp, it is necessary to discuss, at least briefly, the view of Existentialist Aesthetics on art and motivation. There are random reflections on art-creation and motivation in Existentialist Aesthetics. It is inclined towards believing that in art-creation there is motiveless motivation. Art-creation is motiveless because, before creating a particular work of art, the artist has no prevision of what is coming forth. The creation takes its own shape. The creator has no idea of what turn it is going to take in course of its development. For example, even a pregnant woman herself is not aware when a particular limb of the foetus is developed. But when the creation is ready, the work is completed, the phenomenal world imposes or invents some motive in it. Every honest artist, unconcerned with practical loss or gain has no inkling of any such motive. It is along this process of analysis that the Existentialist Aesthetics talks of 'motiveless motivation'. Hence we may arrive at the self-contradictory conclusion that according to Existentialist Aesthetics art is neither motivated nor motiveless. Existentialist art has no overt didactic motives, nor does it intend to drive us towards any ideology. Therefore, it is not motivated. Similarly Existentialist art is neither motiveless because it gives us the parallel reality of life. Existentialist Aesthetics holds it as a principle that art, the Existentialist art in the true sense of the term, has no new proposal to put forward. It does not know putting proposals. It always approves our life as it is. Or, the role of art, in its view, is that of an approver. When it does not approve life as it is or as it is found to be and prefers to put proposals, it suffers from deliberate motivation. It means that the Existentialist art insists on accepting, without hesitation, total insignificance and

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inconsistency of modern life. Hence according to the Existentialist Aesthetics, art has no prearranged motive, consequently, in Existentialist art, there is no deliberate imposition of any motive. It is in non-empirical philosophy that there is deliberate motivation or attempt to impose meaning on the meaningless. Therefore, the Existentialist Aesthetics holds that there should not be any deliberate motive in art. It is different, if in course of creation, some motive develops in it without any conscious effort. Such effortless motive is a constituent of "new morality", proposed by the Existentialists, specially the atheist artists (unlike their orthodox counterparts) who do not love virtue and hate vice. They try to find a metaphysical meaning in natural vice. Thus the liberal "new morality" which has been enunciated by Existentialism has directly influenced the thinking of Existentialist Aestheticism in respect of motivation in art.

It is noteworthy that Existentialist art is closely related to the inner world. Therefore, Existentialist Aesthetics believes in a necessary relation between art-perception and self-devotion. Hence, no expression can be artistic without the seal of the inner world. Objectives of the external world become acceptable to art only when they are reflected in the inner world. This inner world is individualistic. The phenomenal world is the same for all. But the inner world of each individual is different and hence on account of its being related to the inner world, each work of art bears the stamp of the creator's individuality. In other words, art is individualistic and it stands in an inseparable relation with individuality. Therefore, Sartre has very categorically stated his belief that every work of art is created by some individual. In short, a work is always linked with the artist's individuality. Consequently, to be imbued with individuality is a necessity of art.

Obviously, Existentialist Aesthetics, in conformity to the Existentialist philosophy, gives greater importance to "individual truth". It holds that each individual's truth may be different from that of another, in certain respects, it may also be personal. Therefore, Existentialist philosophy accepts individuality and says that every individual is unique—no individual can have a true

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substitute. Hence, it is not possible to fill up the gap created by the death of an individual. Accordingly, Existentialists gives much importance to subjective truth and the Existentialist Aesthetics considers the subjective life-experiences as the basic material of art. These subjective life-experiences sustain the twofold peculiarity of the individual and the world. It is strange that even after having lived the whole life, the individual remains a stranger to himself and to the world which surrounds him. Neither the individual happens to know the world nor does the world happen to know the individual. Every individual, under the pretense of living, or being engaged in some activity, goes on deceiving himself and in course of this self-deception, one day, he is suddenly finished. In this way, loneliness remains his sole companion, then the individual does not remain only a sufferer, he also becomes a witness to all his sufferings. The fact of the same individual being the sufferer and also the witness of his sufferings is a proof of the climax of his loneliness. Keeping this point in view, Existentialist Aesthetics considers the bitter or sweet expression of the said "familiar unfamiliarity" between the individuals and the world, as the covert object (not in the sense of motive) of fine arts.

The result of giving greater importance to subjective truth is that Existentialist Aesthetics, on the one hand, lays emphasis on exploring the hidden treasures of human sensibility, and on the other it considers only such subjective experiences to be the subject matter of art, which are free from intellectual restraints. In Existentialist Aesthetics expression of such experiences is said to be the portrayal of "Existentialist Illumination". But, it is the combined allegation of the idealist and the communist thinkers that, in the name of subjective truth and subjective expressions free from intellectual restraint, or "Existentialist Illumination" in Existentialist literature and art, we get only a depiction of man's evil, depressed and suffering side. Hence, in their opinion, the Existentialist viewpoint, instead of being universal and essentially aesthetic, is but one-sided. In this context it should be noted that the exponents of the religious and the theistic aspects of Existentialism have designated art as 'cipher' and considered it

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as a symbol of extraordinary power and the intermediate kingdom between the seen and the unseen world. Hence the Existentialist thinkers of this category, assess the ability of an artist, considering through what sort of symbols he has given expression to 'existence', how he has outlined the essential individual and how deeply he has explored the frontiers of human conditions. But several progressive thinkers are dissatisfied even with the very concept of Existentialist Aesthetics and they consider it a reflection of the spiritual degeneration of contemporary capitalistic society.

In respect of feelings and images, the notion of Existentialist Aesthetics is not altogether detached from the traditional aesthetics. Existentialist Aesthetics also believes that clarity of meaning in art is achieved with the fusion of feelings and images. In this context, Existentialist Aesthetics adds only this much of its own that the energy of images proves the capacity in the artist of sustaining existence. This capacity in the artist of sustaining existence gives man courage to live, facing openly and boldly all the travesties and monstrous deformities, the nausea and necessity of worldly life. In this way, as already said, according to Existentialist Aesthetics, art neither rises from any subtle spiritual necessity nor is it a mere complement of man's necessary imperfection. It is only nostalgic, full of recurring pain. Since it is throbbing with recurrence of pain, the Existentialist art suffers from an excess of hypochondria or depression. Consequently, it goes to the extent of saying that what is needed for aesthetic beauty in art is not harnessing sensual gratification and charm but including sadness, depression and pathos. Therefore, as compared to traditional aesthetics, Existentialist Aesthetics looks at the depressed, in the ugly and the deformed, from an entirely different angle.

The Existentialist Aesthetics has viewed the relation between art and dream from a new angle. Existentialist Aesthetics' view is somewhat different from Freud's dream analysis. It is only in the context of analysing the mutual relations between art and spontaneity that the Existentialists have thought over art and dream. According to them there is a striking similarity between

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dream-mechanism and art-mechanism. That is why there is similarity also between dream consciousness and aesthetic consciousness inter se. In the context of art and dream relations, it is the specialty of Existentialist Aesthetics, that it has not thought over dreams only from the psychological point of view. Its dream-analysis is mainly 'phenomenological'. In Sartre's famous book, 'The Psychology of Imagination' we find the use of this phenomenological point of view in the analysis of dream and art-images. Success of art lies in giving expression to expression submerged in the depth of existence. In the same way the function of dream is to express in disguise the desires suppressed or hidden in the unfathomable depths of the unconsciousness, which give rise to new life-values. This difference pertains to their application; in their stuff, there is no essential difference.

From the above discussion it is clear that despite several merits, Existentialist Aesthetics suffers from many limitations. Its first limitation is that in it there are several inconsistencies and apparent contradictions. Some of the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies are altogether unnecessary. The main reason behind it is that several types of Existentialists—the theists and the atheists, the German and the French, the old and the new—have turned the Existentialist philosophy into an orchestra in which disharmony and discordant notes are not lacking. The secondary causes behind converting Existentialist Aesthetics into a strange fiddle is that the Existentialists, expounding their theories, have displayed their own jargon. For example, Sartre, in course of discussing art and literature, has rejected the word 'pleasure' and preferred to term the gratification coming from beauty-perception as 'aesthetic joy'. According to Sartre, 'pleasure' denotes 'happiness' which is inadequate to explain beauty-perception. Therefore, Sartre has explained 'joy' according to his Existentialist Aesthetics point of view. In the same way, there is a display of jargon in Heidegger's theories about aesthetics, on account of which principles of art propounded by him are less aesthetical and more philosophical or metaphysical. Heidegger holds that 'being' is entirely different from 'existing reality'. He considers this

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ontological difference between 'being' and 'existing reality' as the root of art-creations. He is inclined to consider form in art as the root of art-creation. He is inclined to consider form in art as 'Gestalt' and 'Ver-winding'. He says that, whatever finds existence in the domain of art becomes more lasting and true than the physical world. If, on the one hand Sartre, in Essays in Aesthetics traditionally accepted supremacy of poetry among the fine arts, Heidegger on the other, has logically established it. Heidegger says that estimate or revelation of truth is the foundation of art. This revelation, estimate or registration of truth is best achieved through the medium of language and it is poetry, which is the origin of language. Thus calling poetry as the essence of art and considering the essence of poetry as the foundation of truth, indicate Heidegger's very high regard for poetry. Perhaps that is why several thinkers have considered 'philosopher poet' as Heidegger's ideal.

According to the traditionalist too, the greatest limitation of Existentialist Aesthetics is its apparent contradiction. Because, on the one hand, the Existentialist Aesthetics considers the unpolluted and undisturbed art-consciousness as essentially uncommitted, and on the other, it considers good art as fully dedicated to every sincere and just commitment. It is quite different that those thinkers who are indifferent to this tangle of commitment and non-commitment, clearly see that the existentialist art intends to express the insignificance, emptiness, nausea, disgust and contempt of life and the world. Albert Camus' works are the most eloquent illustration in question. But the idealists and the extreme optimists are annoyed even with this dominant attitude of the existentialist art. However, in my opinion, their annoyance is not wholly significant, because today our life has really taken the form of meaningless exception, unnecessary concealment and imposed suspense. Hence, what this deformity of modern life has as its factum? It seems that the Existentialist art, portraying with sincerity the reality of life, intends to vibrate with courageous pessimism the human mind which is engrossed with insignificance of life and the world.

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Therefore, the Existentialist art, puts our life before us without any artifice and gives us courage to see our naked life face to face. Indeed the Existentialist artist vents his variegated experiences by portraying defeat, insanity, disgust and death. The most important fact is that the Existentialist art does not want to impose any meaning upon life which is in fact vain and meaningless. Actually till now philosophy and art have been trying hard to cram the meaning of life? And, how can any body collect forcibly poured meaning in the leaking vessel of life. Therefore, any attempt to impose meaning on this really meaningless life is futile. Consequently, the intensity with which the Existentialist artist, fed up with the misfortune of surroundings, has suffered and expressed the pathos of existence and recurrence of uninflected pain, is unprecedented. Therefore, it may be said that the Existentialist art has delineated particularly the suffering of the world (*weltsch merz*) and in it we get a glimpse of man's dejected face and not of his smiling face. Perhaps, that is why it is alleged against the Existentialist Aesthetics that the physical life-world (*lebenswelt*) which the Existentialist artist or aesthetes talk of, is not an objective truth but a philosophical idolum.

In the opinion of the critics, the greatest drawback of Existentialist Aesthetics is its intense subjectivism, because Existentialist Aesthetics intends that the fine arts should wander only in human interiors. On account of this, progressive thinkers brand the Existentialist Aesthetics and philosophy of life as an irrational thought-stream of modern philosophy based on imaginary *weltanschauung*. According to them, the Existentialist Aesthetics, on the plain of art and philosophy of life, is unable to find a solution of depressions and contradictions of the present capitalistic society. Thus in their point of view, Existentialist Aesthetics is a dead stream of thought which has come out of the inevitable corruption and fear in capitalistic society, discontent, despair, moral paralysis and cultural decadence and which is averse to progressive consciousness embedded in contemporary socio-historical forces (some ideas of the later Sartre are exception to this). On the whole, enthusiastic objective thinkers, who believe

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in common good and sociability consider Existentialist Aesthetics as philosophy of over-individualism and declare that it is unacceptable (or even forbidden!).

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Krishna Roy

Interpretations of Evolution by Sri Aurobindo and Hegel

The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is perhaps the most intellectually and spiritually stimulating in Indian thought. Nothing more exalted and profound, more revelatory of the depths and the heights, more powerful to generate unending aspirations has since then been conceived in world history. Sri Aurobindo combines the modern intellectual stimulativeness with ancient intuitive vision.

In the contemporary world-view the trend of 'Fusion Philosophy' has become quite popular. Such 'Fusion Philosophy' incorporates diverse views from different cultural milieu and seeks to offer some suggestions to the basic philosophic issues. This paper seeks to explore such an attempt of playing host to various ideas in the thoughts of many important thinkers. As we consider the contribution of Sri Aurobindo, there also we notice a very illuminating fusion of both East and West, tradition and modernity. Through his extraordinary creative insight Sri Aurobindo not only integrated these various influences but elevated them to a higher metaphysico-spiritual level.

It is well known that both in Indian and Western philosophy, the first question for thought was the problem of the One and the many. We see in the universe a multiplicity of beings and things: The question therefore is: Are they real or only phenomenal? Is the individual simply a result of the transient process of evolution or a play of one original reality—Matter, Mind or Spirit? Does unity

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exist at all and if so, is it a oneness of totality or oneness of essence? Sri Aurobindo's deep concern was to find solutions to these perennial queries of human mind, and he offered his innovative suggestions in his theories of involution and evolution.

The present paper seeks to give an overview of Sri Aurobindo's thought only to note whether in developing this world-view he was influenced by the thought process of another great German idealist philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel.

From the chronological point of view Hegel (1770–1831) was much earlier than Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950). Coming more than hundred years after Hegel, Sri Aurobindo had the natural advantage of being acquainted with his thoughts and writings. Though Sri Aurobindo has scarcely mentioned the name of Hegel in his voluminous writings yet there are enough indications that he was conversant with Hegel's writings and considered him to be a great philosopher. In his *The Human Cycle*, Sri Aurobindo mentions for example: "the real source of the great subjective force ... was not in Germany's statesmen and soldiers ... but came from her great philosophers, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Nietzsche, from her great thinker and poet Goethe ... and from all in the German soul and temperament which they represented".

From such passages it is evident that not only was Sri Aurobindo thoroughly acquainted with the thought of all these German thinkers, but was also very much impressed and even influenced by them. The present paper has three sections: the first section tries to give an overview of the Hegelian concept of evolution; the second section gives a brief outline of Sri Aurobindo's theory of evolution and the third or final section discusses the relation between these two *Weltanschaungen*.

Section I

As we consider the contribution of the great German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831), we realise how meticulously he explicated the various stages of development towards the

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approximation of Spirit. Such gradual realisation of the Spirit may be regarded as spiritual evolution. Being a monist and an idealist, Hegel regarded *Geist* or Spirit to be the only reality. The German word *Geist* has been usually translated as Spirit, Idea or Mind, but it has also been viewed, in the Hegelian system, as Reason, God and State. Thus, the word *Geist* has multiple dimensions and it is being viewed differently from different perspectives. This *Geist* or Spirit is creative and free but Hegel thinks that at first stage the Spirit is unaware of its true nature. In order to be self-conscious the Spirit posits the objects which it knows. This Spirit is infinite but it pretends to be finite and then subsequently seeks to overcome this pretence, to distinguish itself from everything finite, to become fully aware of its own infinity. Though Spirit is the only reality it has to confront itself with something seemingly alien, in order to see through its own self-deception, to become aware that it is the only reality. Such Hegelian processes of creation and subsequent negation of such apparent deception may be regarded as analogous to the processes of involution and evolution.

In order to comprehend Hegel's conception of spiritual evolution, it is necessary to recapitulate some of his discussions in his *The Phenomenology of Mind*, where he states: "The spiritual alone is the real. It is the essence, what exists in itself. It contains itself and becomes determinate; it becomes other-being and being-for-self and in all this determinateness and externality to self, it remains in itself. It is in and for itself. This being-in-and-for-itself is at first merely *for us* or in itself; it is merely Spiritual Substance. But it must also become this *for* itself. In other words, it must become an object to itself, but one also in which this objectivity is forthwith overcome and reflected into itself".[2]

Thus, Hegel's phenomenology is a systematic study of those phenomena collectively describable as a gradual unfoldment of Spirit. At the first stage of being self-conscious, the *Geist* or Spirit posits its opposite; it posits itself as both mind and nature. Hegel describes mind as Subjective Spirit and nature as Objective Spirit and both are parts of the Absolute Spirit. In the discourse on Subjective Spirit, Hegel discusses issues related to anthropology,

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phenomenology and psychology. In his treatise on Objective Spirit we find Hegel's views regarding nature and society. Being alienated from Absolute Spirit, both mind (Subjective Spirit) and nature (Objective Spirit) are finite. In the section entitled 'Alienated Spirit' Hegel elaborates the processes of alienation and de-alienation. In order to understand Hegel's intention, it is necessary to mention that Hegel has used two different German expressions to explain how these processes of alienation and dealienation occur. In some cases Hegel uses the expression *Entausserung* which literally means exteriorisation or detachment, implying turning outward, in order to realise or actualise itself. Hegel also uses another expression, *Entfremdung*, whose literal meaning is surrendering or relinquishment of what man actually is, in order to become what he truly (potentially) is. The first stage of exteriorisation refers to the alienation between Infinite spirit and finite spirit. Such negative stage is the stage of 'unhappy consciousness'; this stage, though indispensable is infelicitous and we have to overcome it by gradual self-actualisation, which is the goal of the positive employment of *Entfremdung*. Hegel uses these expressions to characterise the processes of progressive and alternating self-differentiation and self-identification of the Spirit, which often remind us of the similar processes of involution and evolution.

Besides this notion of self-positing, all-encompassing Spirit (or *Geist*) there is another very illuminating contribution of Hegel's philosophy. It is the process or the method by which this Spirit becomes actualised—it is the famous dialectical method. This dialectical method is a method of progress, where progress comes through conflict. Such dialectical process derives its dynamics of negation from its ability to reveal contradictions within almost any category or identity. It is by means of such negation that the static (or thesis) comes into conflict with its antithesis and then gradually becomes transcended into synthesis. Since the German verb *aufgehoben* means both 'to cancel' and 'to preserve', the Hegelian process of *aufgehoben* implies both removal of error and preservation of truth in the stage of synthesis. The Hegelian

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method, thus, is a method of continuous development but this development comes through negation and opposition. All gradual progression from the lower to the higher follows the dialectical method. Contradictions and conflicts are the moving forces inherent in all beings which transform them into a higher synthesis. Thus, contradiction, in Hegelian metaphysics is inevitable but contradiction is not the end or goal; by cancelling contradiction one reaches to a more complete notion. Such synthesis, however, is not a permanent resting place for Spirit; it further splits up into contradictions and needs reconciliation. This dialectical process continues till the highest Truth, the Absolute Spirit is achieved. In Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and in his other works we notice detailed descriptions of the various stages of the Spirit in and through which the Spirit progressively becomes aware of its own nature as Absolute Spirit.

Having discussed, in brief, the Hegelian notions of *Geist* and dialectics, we are now in a position to understand some of the significant, cryptic statements of Hegel, e.g., 'Logic coincides with Metaphysics' and 'Subject is Substance'. Ordinarily it may appear that Hegel is trying to integrate two completely different trends and beings; but if we remember the basic aspiration of Hegelian philosophy, it would not be difficult to comprehend the inner messages of this idealistic monist. When one speaks of thought or consciousness to be the essence of the world, it may appear confusing as we are usually accustomed to distinguish mind from nature. But if we remember the all inclusive nature of the Hegelian *Geist*, it would not be difficult to understand their underlying unity. Just as thought is the constitutive substance of external things, it is also the universal substance of what is spiritual. Even admitting their basic unity, Hegel admits that in nature thought is present in an unconscious form. But whether thought is present implicitly or explicitly, Hegel reiterates that thought is the constitutive principle of all objective nature.

If we try to interpret the Hegelian philosophy from the perspective of evolution, we notice three distinct phases in the development of the Spirit. The first stage is, in Hegelian

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terminology, the Spirit-in-itself. In this state of nature there is no internal conflict as nature is unaware of its basic spirituality. This nature gradually evolves through the stages of matter, life and consciousness. We also notice the gradual changes from plant soul, animal soul to human soul. The second stage of the Hegelian system is Spirit-for-itself. At this stage the Spirit gains self-consciousness but loses its infinity, becomes finite and is opposed to nature. In this stage we notice individual self-consciousness. In the third or final stage the Spirit becomes in-and-for-itself. This Absolute Spirit is not only the identity of matter and spirit (as in Schelling) but here all differences and oppositions are accommodated in itself.

Thus, it appears that the basic aspiration of Hegel's philosophy was to unite two divergent trends which are both connected yet opposed in a continuous progression from finite spirit to infinite spirit. This, in brief, is the basic philosophy underlying Hegel's theory of spiritual evolution.

Section II

It becomes evident from his various writings that Sri Aurobindo was greatly inspired by the theory of evolution, which he considers to be the keynote of the nineteenth century. Being impressed by the then theory of evolution, Sri Aurobindo wants to give his own ingenious interpretation of the theory. His hermeneutic of evolution is much influenced by the *Weltanschauungen* of both East and West. Being conversant with the intellectual developments of both these traditions Sri Aurobindo wants to accommodate some of those ideas in his own original, imaginative, spiritual interpretation.

There is no doubt that Sri Aurobindo was thoroughly conversant with the two major publications of Charles Darwin (1802–1882) e.g., *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). The basic idea of this theory of evolution is the filiation of each successive form or state of things to that which

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preceded it: the vast and wonderful universe has evolved out of the nebula, protoplasmic life has emerged out of a matter, the more developed grows out of the less developed organism. This materialistic theory of evolution conceives the world as an automatic machine which is operated by physico-chemical laws, without having any conscious agent behind the process.

In his essay on 'Evolution', Sri Aurobindo has given a critique of this scientific theory. This theory, according to Sri Aurobindo, could not offer any intelligent cause or rationale of such transformation and herein lies the 'first paradox' of that theory.

Sri Aurobindo detects a 'second paradox' in the materialist theory which supposes a rigid chain of material necessity. He thinks that since Matter, Life and Consciousness are totally different and irreducible to one another and are governed by their own dominant principles, it is not proper to explain the higher manifestations on the basis of the principle of a lower order.

In place of such rigid, mechanistic evolution, Sri Aurobindo through his various writings wants to propose "a conscious, supple, flexible, intensely surprising and constantly dramatic evolution by a super conscient Knowledge which reveals things in Matter, Life and Mind out of the unfathomable inconsequent from which they rise".[3] This Inconscient is that in which the conscious Spirit is tacitly present. Sri Aurobindo believes that this 'unmanifest' is the fountain out of which the manifest constantly emerges.

Though unacceptable to Sri Aurobindo, the materialistic view of evolution did inspire him to develop his own creative world-view. Without denying the significance of the view where the higher emerges from the lower Sri Aurobindo wants to precede it with involution where the higher descends into the lower. Without the descent of the Spirit into the world, there cannot be any ascent of the world into the Spirit. Since there is descent of the Spirit into Matter, that is why Matter seems to evolve into something higher than Matter, i.e. Life. Further, there is descent of the Spirit into Life and that is the reason why Life seeks to rise to mind. Following this process Sri Aurobindo holds that since

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there is descent of the Spirit into Mind that Mind would move towards its source by ascending to the Supermind. But this process of ascent would not stop until the Absolute Spirit or *Sachchidananda* is attained.

The originality of Sri Aurobindo's thought lies in supplementing the process of involution in addition to stages of evolution. In his *The Life Divine* we notice the detailed discussion of the stages of both involution and evolution. The stages of involution are the following: Existence, Consciousness-Force, Bliss, Supermind, Psyche (or Soul), Life, Matter. The order of evolution is as follows: Matter, Life, Psyche, Mind, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness-Force, Existence.

The present paper does not intend to trace all the different stages of involution and evolution as discussed by Sri Aurobindo. Rather it seeks to explore the importance of Sri Aurobindo's contribution and whether his ingenious worldview has some affinity with other preceding views, particularly that of Hegel.

The significance of Sri Aurobindo's theory lies in recognising the possibility of further development of man in continuation of the gradual progressive process of evolution. With the superb intuition of a Yogi and a genius, Sri Aurobindo foresees further stages of development: from consciousness to Supramental consciousness. Since matter has developed in mind, then there is every possibility that consciousness may itself be only a form and a veil of higher states which are above mind. Thus Supermind is the link between the ultimate reality, *Sachchidananda* and the finite world. The involution is an act of creation of the cosmos by the downward descent of *Sachchidananda* into lower principles and such process has been regarded as the plunge of the spirit into ignorance. But this plunge into ignorance is only for the purpose of coming back to knowledge and self-consciousness. This urge for self-realisation becomes manifest in different stages of evolution. Hence evolution, to Sri Aurobindo, is an upward movement of ascent and spiritualisation of the world.

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SECTION III

From the brief overview of the theories of evolution, offered by Hegel and Sri Aurobindo, it seems that there are some striking resemblances as well as significant differences between the two. I would first mention some of the basic similarities between these two views. First, Sri Aurobindo's account of ultimate reality as Pure Conscious Existence reminds us of the Hegelian notion of Absolute Spirit. Both these theories may be regarded as spiritual theories of evolution, since both of them hold that the ultimate reality is absolute, infinite Spirit, which though immanent in all forms, yet transcends its manifestations.

Secondly, both these thinkers are one in recognising an original, creative and evolutionary power in the Spirit. Both reconcile the eternal reality of being with the temporal world of becoming and explain the evolution as the free act of creation.

Thirdly, both Hegel and Sri Aurobindo regard that the process of evolution is preceded by a process of involution. Though the term 'involution' does not occur in Hegelian writings, yet, as we have mentioned before, that in his *The Phenomenology of Spirit* there is a chapter on 'Alienated Spirit' that shows how the Spirit posits the stages of matter and mind in order to realise its own nature. Hegel calls it the process of *Entausserung* or making something as other. This self-alienating process is almost the same as Sri Aurobindo's process of descent of the Spirit or involution. Both agree that such alienation or involution can be properly understood by another process of *Entfremdung* (in Hegel) and evolution (in Sri Aurobindo). For both of them the process of evolution is nothing but being aware of its true inner source and is a sort of de-alienation or home-coming.

Fourthly, another striking similarity between the thought processes of these two eminent thinkers is their common integrative attitude. For both of them the process is integral in the basic sense of lifting up and linking components of one stage into a whole, which is richer and higher than the others. Hegel used the German expression *aufgehoben* (to lift up, to re-create) to

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describe how the stages become transformed and elevated. Even in Sri Aurobindo every stage in the evolutionary process retains all the preceding stages and even foreshadows the future ones. For both, the integral consciousness is the basis of entire harmonisation of life through the total transformation, unification or integration of the being and the nature.

Fifthly, we notice a common pattern in Hegel's conception of Absolute Knowledge and Sri Aurobindo's conception of Absolute Reality. We notice that though Hegel was impressed by Schelling's concept of abstract identity, he never accepted such a notion of pure identity, which excludes all differences. For Hegel that identity is important and concrete which includes all differences. Hegel's criticism of such pure identity is akin to Sri Aurobindo's criticism of Sankaracharya. Sri Aurobindo's Absolute Reality is the consciousness of truth which includes all differences. When you reach the goal the path is not lost, rather the path forms its part. Hence both Sri Aurobindo and Hegel are one in recognising that all differences are important and the highest identity is that which includes all differences.

Moreover, while going through the very illuminative essay by Sri Aurobindo on the classical Greek philosopher Heraclitus I perceive a common source of inspiration in that early Greek philosophy.

Paying rich tribute to Heraclitus, Sri Aurobindo considers him to be the most stimulative thinker. With a strong concrete intuition and having acute sense of realities, Heraclitus recognised the eternal coexistence of the One and the many. Existence is externally One and many. Sri Aurobindo holds that Heraclitus "seems to recognise the inextricable unity of the eternal and the transitory, that which is forever and yet seems to exist only in this strife and change which is a continual dying".[4] From this Sri Aurobindo detects another very important principle in Heraclitus: it is the recognition that within each there is an eternal opposition, a tension of contraries, and it is this tension which creates the balance necessary for harmony. Sri Aurobindo discusses some of the major dictums of Heraclitean cosmology: one is "One out of

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all and all out of One" and the other is "All things becoming according to strife". The first Heraclitean dictum "One out of all and all out of One" seems to be the anticipation of the processes of evolution and involution, ascent and descent, alienation and de-alienation in Sri Aurobindo and Hegel at a much earlier period. The impact of the second Heraclitean dictum "all things becoming according to strife" can be clearly noticed in the thought processes of both Hegel and Sri Aurobindo. We have already noticed how contradiction forms a basic principle in Hegelian dialetic. Such contradiction is part of nature's general method; it is a sign of marching towards greater harmony. Even in Sri Aurobindo man's highest aspiration—his seeking for perfection, his search for truth and bliss—is in constant opposition to his material existence and normal experience. Thus, through his essay on Heraclitus, Sri Aurobindo seems to trace the source of their common evolutionary cosmology.

Further, while going through the writings of Hegel and Sri Aurobindo, we often notice how history provides a very important role to the heart of the basic ideas of both these thinkers. They were equally interested in the history of man and in the history of society. It is also very interesting to trace how both these thinkers wanted to relate transcendental spiritualism to practical realism. The present paper does not go into the details of their social and political conceptions, yet draws attention to their common concern for socio-political issues. Though primarily concerned with the transcendental, they never ignored the empirical world. Transcendental and practical are thoroughly integrated in their ideas.

It appears from the above discussion that one cannot miss the basic similarity between the philosophic temperament of Hegel and Sri Aurobindo. But these commonalities should not prevent one from recognising the fundamental differences between these two thinkers. We know that being a thoroughgoing rationalist, Hegel gave much importance to Reason as the supreme determining principle. For Hegel, the entire process of development is a rational process. Without supporting such primacy of reason,

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Sri Aurobindo rather holds that knowledge of reality is to be conceived in terms of immediate apprehension rather than in terms of thought. In several places of his writings Sri Aurobindo clearly asserts that reason is more an intermediary and a step towards higher perfection but not the sovereign master of our being. For him, reason cannot have any access to the level of noumena and it is intuition that brings in the message of the transcendental realm. It is from the Vedic seers and ancient tradition that he inherited such luminosity of intuition.

Another basic difference between Hegel and Sri Aurobindo becomes evident as we consider the relation between finite beings and their infinite source in Spirit. In the Hegelian evolutionary process finite beings gradually reach the Absolute by ascending the stages of evolution; for Sri Aurobindo our aspiration and effort should be supported by divine grace for the realisation of our true nature. The deeper significance of Sri Aurobindo lies in giving us a detailed outline of the process through which our terrestrial existence (material, vital and mental) is to ascend to a higher unity, how we can move towards a radical and integral transformation of our present nature. Imbibing the spirit of classical Indian philosophy with his own richer intuition, Sri Aurobindo, suggests the method of integral yoga and the process of 'triple transformation'. In his *The Life Divine*, he writes: "There must first be the psychic change, the conversion of our whole present nature into a soul-instrumentation; on that or along with that there must be the spiritual change, the descent of a higher Light, Knowledge, Power, Force, Bliss, Purity into the whole being, even into the lowest recesses of the life and body, even into the darkness of our subconscience; last, there must supervene the supramental transmutation, there must take place as the crowning movement the ascent into the supermind and the transforming descent of the supramental consciousness into our entire being and nature".[5] Even without going into the details of such thought-provoking suggestions, it becomes evident from what we have discussed that Sri Aurobindo's plan for future evolution of man is not merely an automatic process but requires the participation

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of both the ordinary mind and the supermind. The ordinary minds must have the aspiration to realise their true essence, which must be supplemented by a 'direct and unveiled intervention from above.' Unlike Hegel or any other evolutionist, Sri Aurobindo suggests the order from Mind to Supermind as follows: Mind, Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuition, Overmind and Supermind. Discussions of these stages bring out the novelty, creativity and sagacity of Sri Aurobindo's view.

Sri Aurobindo had the authentic aspiration to regenerate the spirit of classical India as well as the unique insight to comprehend the emergence of newer principles and the arrival of higher spiritual realities. Herein lies the everlasting significance of Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of evolution.

NOTES

1. Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry, 1970, pp. 34–35.
2. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by J.B. Baillie, p. 86 quoted by J.N. Findlay in *Hegel: A Re-Examination*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1958, p. 36.
3. Sri Aurobindo, Essay entitled "Evolution' in *The Supramental Manifestation and Other Writings*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry, 1989, p. 321.
4. Sri Aurobindo, Essay entitled 'Heraclitus' in *ibid*, p. 36.
5. Sri Aurobindo, *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, Part II, Arya Publishing House, Calcutta, 1940, p. 11.

Note: The earlier version of this article was presented at the National Seminar on *Supramental Consciousness: Sri Aurobindo and Other Evolutionists*, organised by Indian Council of Philosophical Research at New Delhi in March, 2004.

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Sibesh Bhattacharya

The Historical Universe of Puranas*

We are making here an attempt to explore and understand the contours of the conceptual universe of the authors of Puranas regarding what they perceived as history. Till quite recently, it was accepted as a truism that ancient Indians had no sense of or interest in history. Various explanations of this 'deficiency' were also offered; the most persistent being the one that Indian outlook in its philosophical and psychological makeup was anti-historical. The point has been stretched in different directions with added nuances. Winternitz and Keith may be cited as examples. "What Indians lacked was not, however, taste for history, but taste for criticism and for historical truth And the reason for this is that the writers of history have as a rule been either court-poets or religious-minded persons. For the former the main task has been to sing praises of their princes, to record their and their ancestors' heroic deeds and probably also invent such ones as never took place. The saints have, above all, been all along busy either with the praise of their sect or in preaching sermons to the community and to cause it to increase... The Indian historian ... will not penetrate deep into the connected topics, set down the historical data critically and explain them psychologically; on the contrary he will entertain and instruct as a poet (*kavi*), above all teach morals, when he will explain with examples the influences of moral behaviour on the destiny of man."[1] Six years later, Keith observed 'in the whole of the great Sanskrit literature there is not one writer who can be seriously regarded as a critical historian.' According

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to him the probable causes of 'this phenomenon' were the lack of 'any sentiment of nationalism', the belief in the doctrine of *Karman*, the absence of the scientific attitude of mind which seeks to find natural causes for the events of nature' and the 'tendency of the Indian mind to prefer the general to the particular'.[2]

The Orientalist formulations that ancient Indians lacked sense of history is not accepted any longer Already in the late fifties we find A.K. Warder reacting angrily against these. He wrote, "It used to be said that ancient India produced little or no historical literature. It was even suggested that the ancient Indians lacked the 'historical sense' possessed by other peoples: that they were too religious to be interested in such worldly matters. We need not trouble ourselves overmuch with the analysis of such superficial misconceptions."[3] The impatience of Warder is not wholly unjustified because the proposition not only runs counter to facts but verges on absurdity even from a commonsense stand point. To say that a people did not have a sense of history amounts to saying that they had no view of past or an awareness of time. Such an obviously untenable proposition could have been hardly seriously made about early India. Early Indian philosophical systems reflect an acute consciousness of time.[4] Thus the central contention of scholars like Winternitz and Keith seems to have been that the way the discipline of history developed in the West is found practically absent in early Indian literary tradition. Ghoshal and Warder have succeeded in demonstrating that even this contention is not fully maintainable.[5] But the proposition may also be approached and evaluated from another perspective. We may try to understand the kind of past events that occupied or engaged the interest of ancient Indians and how they viewed those events and in what manner they related themselves to those events.[6]

A large number of terms denoting past events were in continuous vogue in ancient India right from the Vedic age. It is true that the exact connotations of these terms are debatable and that it is not possible to ascertain how far these terms referred to actual historical past and to what extent to mythical time. But all

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the same they do represent certain attitudes to past. It is important to understand these attitudes for gaining some insight into the ancient Indian 'idea of history'.

Despite the fact that religion is the basic theme of Vedic literature, it contains references to certain forms of compositions which may be termed as historical. They merit the label of 'historical compositions' in the sense that they represent an attempt to preserve and transmit the memory of what was regarded as 'memorable' or 'significant' in human past. Songs and verses were composed in praise of worthy deeds. The *Ṛgveda* states that kings were very fond of royal eulogies as a form of literary composition.[7] It appears that there was a class of versifiers and singers similar to the later day bards: *gathin, vinagathin, vinaganagin,* etc., who specialised in the composition and narration of this kind of eulogies.[8] In the genealogies of Vedic seers—the *vamsa* and *gotra-pravara* lists—the beginnings of another tradition of historical writings can be glimpsed.[9]

Various terms connoting historical compositions like *gatha, narasamsi, itihasa, purana, akhyana,* etc, are found referred to in Vedic literature. These historical compositions, it appears, became a part of the ritualistic tradition that dominated the Vedic literature. The recounting of glorious and heroic stories of past was a part of the great Vedic sacrifices like *asvamedha.*[10] These were also narrated in the course of some domestic rituals.[11] Similarly, the *vamsa* and *gotra-pravara* lists harked back to divine ancestors and mythical sages.[12] The dominance of religion and ethics over history in varying degrees remained a permanent feature of Indian view of history and history was never fully delinked from religion and ethics. That *itihasa* was called a *Veda* is an eloquent testimony of its very strong ethico-religious association.[13]

However, there are certain indications that these historical compositions originated independently of the ritual tradition in a secular milieu and later got incorporated into the ritual system. The term *narasamsi* signified 'verse celebrating men'.[14] The *Aitareya Brahmana* distinguished *gatha* from *rik* by stating that while the former is merely human, the latter is divine.[15] Although

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gatha and *narasamsi* had often been distinguished, they had as often been represented as kindred terms.[16] A passage in the *Atharvaveda* enumerated the following kinds of works: *rik, saman, yajus, brahmana, itihasa, purana, gatha, narasamsi.*[17] The passage seems to refer to two different classes of compositions, the one religious (*rik, saman, yajus,* and *brahmana)* and the other secular or historical *(itihasa, purana, gatha, narasamsi)*. The *Kathaka Samhita* describes both *gatha* and *narasamsi* as false (*anritam*).[18] There is a statement in the *Satapatha Brahmana* which appears interesting in this context: "Twofold, verily, is this, there is no third, viz. truth and untruth. And verily, the gods are the truth and man is the untruth."[19] There is little doubt that *gatha* and *narasamsi* was not religio-spiritual but human and secular.[20] It may perhaps be surmised that right from the early Vedic age there was a floating tradition of historical compositions, originally non-Vedic and non-ritualistic, which celebrated the heroic and noble deeds of men. These were mainly eulogistic songs and their main patrons were kings who were fond of such compositions.[21] In consequence of the growth of big Vedic sacrifices historical narratives acquired a place in the ritual system because the kings who were the clients of these elaborate Vedic scarifies were also the patrons of historical narratives. This paved the way for the inclusion of secular heroic narratives as parts of religious sacrificial lore. *Narasamsa,* from which *narasamsi* was derived, was associated with rites devoted to deceased fathers.[22] The recounting of glories of departed ancestors or past generations thus formed an important component of what was regarded as historical narratives. The recitation of lores of past became an important element in the performance of *rajasuaya, asvamedha,* etc.[23] There were experts, *akhyanavid, puranavid,* etc., in the narration of historical lores, whose services were utilised in the rituals.[24] In fact, Yaska hints at the fact that there was a school of *aitihasikas* who specialised in interpreting Vedic hymns through *itihasa,* in contrast to the *nairuktas* who relied on etymology for Vedic interpretation.[25]

Gatha, narasamsi, akhyana, etc., seem to have been predominantly legends celebrating heroic and noble deeds. In

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them the line separating the human and suprahuman was not important. Thus there were *indragathas* and *yajnagathas,* and the *akhyana* of the union of a divine nymph with a mortal hero and its inevitable tragic consequences.[26] These narratives in the Vedic literature were considered as having a mystical aspect about them which facilitated their way into the ritual system.

Among the various history-denoting terms current in early India, the central space was occupied by the twin terms: *itihasa* and *purana,* often joined together in a compound. It is not easy to define these terms precisely and to bring out the precise relationship between the two. Both the terms apparently were very old; *itihasa,* clearly and unambiguously had made its appearance already in the *Atharvaveda.*[27] Then in the *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads,* it is a frequently occurring term and usually in association with *purana.*[28] And already in the Vedic period *itihasa* and *purana,* jointly or separately, had acquired the status of a Veda.[29] It is clear that *itihasa* and *purana* had a very intimate relationship ; their subject matter must have covered a great deal of common ground and must have often overlapped. The points of distinction between the two—the use and continuation of both the terms over a very long period suggest that they were not regarded as synonymous to begin with—got blurred and confused. This confusion is strikingly illustrated by the contradictory positions taken by such famous authorities as Medhatithi and Sankaracharya on the one hand and by Sayanacharya on the other. Whereas Sankaracharya and Medhatithi describe the creation account *(srishtiprakriya)* as constituting *purana* and Urvasi-Pururava legend as *itihasa,* Sayana regards creation account as *itihasa* and Urvasi-Pururava legend as *purana.*[30] In the *Arthavada* (i.e. explanatory) portions of the Brahmanas, however, the *akhyanas* of Urvasi-Pururava and that of Sunhasepa have been given as examples of *itihasa* and creation account as that of *purana.*[31]

But our main concern here is to understand the way past was viewed in early India and thus the elucidation of the elusive boundary between *itihasa* and *purana* is not central to our objective. In the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya there is a passage which

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gives us a fairly accurate and broad idea about the perspective in which *itihasa* was viewed. The *Arthasastra* perspective is also interesting because it is the product of an age in which Puranic literature was receiving its standardised form.[32] The passage occurs in connection with the training programme designed for the prince for equipping him for rulership. The passage seems extremely significant and merits detailed review.

The *Arthasastra* passage occurs in the chapter on the training of the prince. The training programme had a clearly structured character. The training started at a very early age immediately after the tonsure ceremony (*chaula*) was performed. At this primary stage the prince was first introduced to alphabet and numbers as a foundation for the more rigorous intellectual training to follow. After the sacred thread ceremony (*upanayana*) began the training on the three Vedas and the philosophical systems and the management of economic and political affairs. After gaining a thorough grounding in these and after the prince attained manhood he was asked to cultivate constantly the association of wise and knowledgeable people 'for the sake of improving his training'.[33] It is in this context that Kautilya prescribed that the prince should spend the second half of everyday in 'listening to *itihasa*'.[34] And then comes the passage describing the scope and constituents of *itihasa*. "The *Puranas, Itivritta, Akhyayika, Udadarana, Dharmasastra and Arthasastra*—these constitute *Itihasa*".[35]

Purana, Dharmasastra and *Arthasastra,* it is well known, signified distinct classes of literature. They also bore the stamps of distinctive modes and attitudes. It can thus be surmised that the other three, i.e., *itivritta, akhyayika* and *udaharana* must have more or less shared these characteristics. All these must have had their separate existence and distinctive character. However, *purana, itivritta, akhyayika* and *udaharana* appear to have shared a family likeness; all of them seem to have been narratives of old events. They differed from one another not so much in character as in scope and range. *Udaharana,* as the term suggests, probably signified a collection of separate events exemplifying success and

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failures. Kautilya apparently gives us a few samples of *udaharana* in the chapter entitled 'Casting out the Group of Six Enemies' dealing with the necessity of controlling the evil impulses and passions of the prince.[36] The *udaharana* narratives did not seem to have any chronological order or sequential unity. The incidents in *akhyayika* had internal connectedness and unity. *Akhyayika* was a variant of or derivation form *Akhyana.* This form of narratives appears to have been popular since the Vedic period for their dramatic quality and for their morals and were given a place in the ritual system.[37] Generally *akhyana* dealt with a particular story. Sometimes, however, a number of *akhyanas* were put together as in the *pariplavani* cycle.[38] Even the whole of the Mahabharata was sometimes called an *akhyana* although it contained within itself numerous independent *akhyanas.*[39] *Akhyayika* later appeared to have acquired a standardised narrative form pertaining to the lives and activities of rulers.[40] Anyway, this seems clear that *akhyana-akhyayika* had for its theme a single 'event' or 'story' with a beginning, middle and end. *Itivritta* and its synonym *puravritta* perhaps signified events covering a longer period and range than *akhyayika,* the suffix *vritta* suggests a sequential order. *Itivritta* also seems to hint at a circular or cyclical concept of history. *Itivritta* or the variant *puravritta* perhaps meant a cycle of events.

It is not possible to trace the evolution of the term *purana* with precision. That it referred to accounts of 'olden past' is obvious, the very expression *purana* is a sufficient indication. Whether Puranic traditions antedated the Vedas, whether they were anti-Vedic and anti-Brahmanic are questions that await final answers.[41] We may take up these issues later for further discussion. Here it would suffice to note that by the time the *Arthasastra* was composed and the Puranic literature was getting formalised, the scope of the theme of *puranas* had acquired a truly vast sweep. It included the entire process of creation and evolution and accommodated within this frame a number of secondary beginnings and disintegration of the world and the succession of the *yugas* and the accounts of all significant beings and events It is not only the sumptuousness of the marvellous elements in these

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accounts, but also the vastness of the scope that disagrees with our contemporary sensibilities The point that we are trying to make here is that *udaharana, akhyayika, itivritta* and *purana* represented a series of a gradually arranged wider perspectives in history; the scope of *akhyayika* was wider than *udaharana, itivrtta* was wider than *akhyayika,* and *purana* wider than *itivrtta.* According to Kautilya, *itihasa* included all of the above and even more; it also included *Dharmasastra* and *Arthasastra.* The inclusion of *Dharmasastra* and *Arthasastra* appears particularly interesting as it seems to underline the social perspective of history.[42] Events could be viewed and understood only against their social backdrops.

Itihasa in the light of the *Arthasastra* passage appears to have been considered as a wholesome study of the affairs of this world preparing man to comprehensively meet his social obligations. Its study seemed to have a special value for a ruler. It ranked in importance next to the three Vedas and *anvikshaki* which were predominantly geared to the realisation of *moksha* and economics and politics.[43] *Itihasa* in contrast to *Vedas* and *anvikshaki* put equal emphasis on all of the four *chaturvaga.*

This passage would also allow us to form an idea about the way an 'event' in history was conceived. Any narrative was not necessarily historical; to acquire the status of history a narrative also had to be instructive.[44] It is the ability to teach and instruct that invests an event with significance. The notion of significance from this point of view is essentially ethical because only that has the ability to instruct which can contribute to well-being and happiness and because the attainment of well-being hinges on the ability to make the distinction between right and wrong. It is noteworthy that although Kautilya's *Arthasastra* was a text that predominantly dealt with the secular matter of royal policies within the framework of secular objectives of the realisation of success of royal policies, the way history *(itihasa)* was perceived by Kautilya had a strong ethical underpinning.[45] This is clear from the narration of events of excesses committed by the rulers of yore that led them to their doom. Those events were narrated by Kautilya as part of instructions to the prince as illustrations of conduct to be abjured.[46]

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Normally an event was also regarded as one with a fullsome storyline. It was a whole, a finished product with defined boundaries, with a beginning, a middle and an end. It usually contained one or more of *akhyana/akhyayika* characterised by different parts succeeding in sequential order. Prof. V.S. Pathak has described and illustrated these parts in his work.[47] These parts were beginning (*prarambha*), the efforts (*prayatna*), the hope of achieving the objective (*praptyasa*), the certainly of achievement (*niyatapti'*) and the achievement (*phalagama*). A book of *itihasa* could consist of a single *akhyana/akhyayika* like *Harshacharita.*[48] It could also include many many *akhyanas* sewn around a central theme as in the *Mahabharata* which was also called *Bharatakhyana* though it contained a large number of other independent *akhyanas.*[49]

The *Arthasastra* passage also sheds some light on the relationship between *itihasa* and *purana.* In Kautilya's view, we have noted above, *purana* was a part of *itihasa,* and the two were thus intimately related. The scope of *itihasa* was perhaps wider than *purana,* for *purana* was only one of the various elements or forms of *itihasa.* Although the *Arthasastra* passage has been interpreted as indicating that *purana* was only one among the several elements which together constituted *itihasa,* the passage is also liable to interpretation to the effect that *itihasa* had many forms or variants specified by Kautilya and that these variants separately or together merited the name of *itihasa.* We have also noted above that the relation between *itihasa* and *purana* and the scope and content of them were matters on which famous authorities disagreed and took opposite positions. Thus it is not possible to decide whether the passage in the *Arthasastra* represented merely Kautilya's personal view of *itihasa* or it reflected the commonly perceived perception of his time. That Kautilya included *Dharamasastra* and *Arthasastra* in *itihasa* may help us to understand why the Epics and *puranas* included didactic material and *Dharmasastra* and *Arthasastra* material in such abundance.

It is worth trying to understand why the expression *purana* stood both for ancient lore as well as for a specific class of

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literature. Winternitz has surmised that a mass of ancient lores and traditions existed as a floating body which served as a common storehouse from which various forms of literary expressions like *gatha narasamsi, vamsa, akhyana,* etc., drew their material.[50] The Puranic form seems to have developed by absorbing many of these forms within itself. The *Vishnupurana,* for example, tells us that there were three constituent elements of the *puranas: gatha, akhyana* and supplementary *akhyana.*[51] They were collated within the framework of *vamsas* to produce the *vamsanucharita* to provide the *puranas* with some of its so-called distinctive marks—the *panchalakshanas.*[52] The development of *puranas* through adaptation, absorption and integration of earlier mass of historical traditions and compositions represented a process of growth of historical narratives. It represented growth even in physical terms in the sense that *purana* constituted a collection of an enormous corpus much larger in scope and volume than the earlier available forms. However, *purana* reflected more than physical expansion; it also marked the broadening of the scope and subject matter of history as new elements and aspects were added by *puranakaras. Puranas* thus also represented a widening of the perspective in the conceptual framework of history. That *puranas* signified an extension of the conceptual horizon of the perception of history merits special attention. Since *puranas* became the repository of all aspects of past, the expression *purana* came to signify both the old lores as well as the class of literature preserving the old lores.

From another perspective also, *puranas* may be considered as marking a continuous and dynamic growth of the historical narrative. Through the process of *upabrimhana* new material covering immediate past was continuously added to the existing corpus updating the narrative and keeping it attuned to contemporary requirements and tastes.[53] This saved the narrative from getting stale and investing it with a certain amount of ever greenness. This, moreover, also underlined the relevance of past to the present by relating the past to the contemporary.

It is thus abundantly clear that the custom of documenting past in India had a very long and old history; the earliest recorded traces

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of this custom are available in Vedic literature. There existed a definite tradition of preserving the memory of memorable and significant events of past. This tradition was generally called *purana-itihasa* tradition. There were bards and minstrels whose business was to compose, narrate and preserve glorious and heroic deeds. It seems that a class of specialists arose who developed expertise in preserving records of past; these experts constituted the 'school of historians' for the society. We have noted above that originally they did not form an integral part of the Vedic ritualistic tradition. The matter which was of primary concern to the preservers of heroic lore, the school of the *aitihasika-puranika,* was mainly secular and was disapproved by the orthodoxy on that count. Even if one does not wholeheartedly agree with Pargiter's view[54] that *purana-itihasa* tradition represented Kshatriya tradition in contrast to the Vedic Brahmanical—the two might not have been as antithetical as Pargiter contends—there is no denying the fact that they originally belonged to two distinct traditions.

A large number of terms for these specialists are found. Some of the more frequently used terms in Pauranic literature were *puravid, puranavid, puranajna, puranika, vamsavid, vamsachintaka, vamsa-puranajna, anuvamsapuranajna,* etc. It is not possible to locate and demarcate specific areas of specialisation associated with these terms which were often used loosely without adhering to a fixed meaning.[55] From the *puranas* it appears that these specialists were also known by a common and broader term, the *suta.* The duties and functions of *suta* can be sketched with certain amount of definiteness. "The *sutas* special duty as perceived by goodmen of old was to preserve the genealogies of gods, *Rishis* and most glorious kings, and the traditions of great men, which are displayed by those who declare sacred lore in the *itihasa* and *puranas*".[56] It was thus *suta's* function to preserve the memories of 'glorious kings', 'the traditions of great men', 'the eulogies' of famous people and the genealogies. The *suta* was a *pauranika,* a specialist in ancient lore, a *vamsakusala,* an expert in genealogies.[57]

The *pauranika sutas* were different from the *varna samkara sutas* mentioned in the *smriti* literature. Kautilya makes a clear distinction

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between the two.[58] The *pauranika sutas* appear to have been learned people and apparently they belonged to the cultivated class. V.S. Pathak has drawn the attention of scholars to the fact that the Bhrigvangirasa families had shown special aptitude and interest in the preservation and propagation of historical lores.[59] The close relation between the Bhrigvangirasas and *Itihasa-Purana* has been recorded especially in the *Chandogya Upanishad* At one place it states that the *Atharvaveda* bears the same relation to *itihasa-purana* as the *Ṛgveda* to *Rik, Samaveda* to *Saman, Yajurveda* to *Yajus* At another place we find a clearer statement: "Atharvangirasas are the bees, the *Itihasapurana* is the flower." At yet another place it states that the hymns of the Atharvangirasas brooded over the *itihasapurana.*[60] It is possible that the *pauranika sutas* belonged to the Bhrigvagirasa extraction and the antiquity of the *itihasapurana* was not very much shorter than that of the Vedas.[61]

The account of the compilation of *purana* in the *Vayu, Brahmanda* and *Vishnu Purana* attributed it to Veda Vyasa. After accomplishing the stupendous task of systematisation and division of Vedas into four, the *Rik, Saman, Yajus* and *Atharva* and entrusting them to four of his disciples—Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Sumantu respectively, Maharshi Krishna Dvaipayana complied a *Purana Samhita* and entrusted it together with *itihasa* to his fifth disciple *suta* Lomaharshana or Romaharshana. After that he composed the *Bharatakhyanam.*[62]

This account of the systematisation of the *Vedas,* the compilation of the *Purana* and the composition of the *Mahabharata* is highly interesting. Even though this account has been treated with scepticism by scholars generally, no really valid argument can be advanced for dismissing off completely its authenticity. If Vedic literature is silent about this tradition of Vyasa's dividing the Veda into four, there is nothing surprising about this omission. Vyasa had merely organised the *Vedas,* there is no reason why the texts should contain any reference to him, he only arranged the Vedic texts without, presumably, any kind of interference with the texts themselves which were already in existence before his own time and which were traditionally regarded as of non-human

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(*apauruseya*) origin. It is also natural that the language, culture and the universe reflected in the *Vedas* on the one hand and the *Purana* and the *Mahabharata* on the other should be quite distinct because the methods followed by Vyasa in regard to the *Vedas* and *Purana-Mahabharata* were quite different. In the case of the *Vedas,* Vyasa's work was limited merely to arrangement and organisation, in the case of the *Purana* and the *Mahabharata* he was not just an organiser but also a composer author. It is interesting further to note that whereas for the *Vedas* he divided a single text into four divisions, for the *Puranas* he collected a large number of existing traditions and accounts into a single whole. As for the *Mahabharata* Vyasa is credited with composing it.

That the later history of the development of Vedic Literature and *purana itihasa* should take on different lines was also natural; the reason for the same lay inherent in the very nature of the texts. *Vedic* texts were finished products, they dealt with things become, the *Purana* on the other hand dealt with things becoming, there was scope for continuous addition of new material to it as new historical facts kept piling up. When looked at from this point of view, Vyasa's work in regard to the arrangement of the *Vedas* proved much more enduring than his compilation of the *Purana-samhita,* the *Vedic-samhitas* as arranged by Vyasa have remained intact, the *Purana-samhita* compiled by Vyasa has got buried under later growth.

The traditional number of the *puranas* is considered eighteen, stamp the *puranas* with their sectarian views and attitude. Thus the handiwork of Vyasa got lost.[63] The Brahmanical embellishments led to a change in the nature of the *puranas* giving the original secular Puranic accounts a religious character narrowing the gulf that divided the theological Vedic traditions and the non-religious Puranic heritage.[64]

However, since we are concerned here with the *puranas* as historical literature, we need not dwell on the history of the development of puranic literature in detail. Let us therefore look at the constituent elements which had gone into the formation of the *puranas* to get an idea about the kind of the historical material found in them.

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The traditional account of the compilation of the original *purana-samhita* by Vyasa tells us that he had collected *akhyana, upakhyana, gatha* and *kalpa-jokti* for the same.[65] In this connection it may also be noted that traditionally *purana* was regarded as a class of literature that contained the following five characteristics (*pancha-laksana*): original creation (*sarga*), dissolution and recreation (*pratisarga*), genealogy (*vamsa*) transition of Manus (*manvantara*) and accounts of persons mentioned in the genealogies (*vamsanucharita*).[66] These give us a fair idea about the kinds of materials originally used for the composition of the Puranic literature. It also appears that same kinds of materials also constituted the basic raw material of the *itihasa*. The subject matter of the original *purana* thus seems to have consisted mainly of traditions about gods, about ancient *rishis* and kings, about ancient genealogies and biographies.

No great distinction seems to have been made between *itihasa-purana* and *akhyana*, they were often treated as synonymous. "As collective terms *Itihasa* and *Purana* are often mentioned as distinct, and yet are sometimes treated as much the same; thus the *Vayu* calls itself both a *Purana* and an *Itihasa*, and so also the *Brahmanda*. The *Brahma* calls itself a *Purana* and an *Akhyana*; the *Mahabharata* calls itself by all these terms."[67] An *akhyana*, however, does not seem to have been just any kind of old tales. It seems to have been a tale of special nature, a tale to illustrate a moral or a lesson It was generally didactic. We might remember that the concept of history in ancient India generally had always been strongly didactic in nature. However, according to Pargiter, the didactic *dharma* matter which loom very large in the extant *puranas* were added later by the Brahmanas into whose hands the task of the preservation of the *puranas* had passed from their original custodians, the *sutas*.[68] It is significant that *dharma* does not directly figure at all among the five characteristic features of the *puranas* (the *panchalaksana*). Neither does it figure in the list of the materials used by Vyasa for his compilation of the original *puranasamhita*, *upakhyana* obviously belonged to the same *genre* as *akhyana*, the difference being perhaps in size and dimension.[69] *Gatha* meant a song in praise of

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noble and heroic deeds.[70] Besides the *kalpajoktis*, thus the heroic traditions, lores and tales of past embodied in *akhyana, upakhyana, gatha*, etc., constituted the main Puranic material.

Of the original five characteristics of the *purana*, the *panchalaksana* (original creation, dissolution and recreation, the *manvantaras*, ancient genealogies and accounts of persons mentioned in the genealogies), Pargiter writes "The first three subjects that *Puranas* should treat of, are based on imagination, are wholly fanciful, and do not admit of any practical examination, hence it would be a vain pursuit to investigate them... The fourth and fifth subjects are, however, genealogies and tales of ancient kings, profess to be historical tradition and do admit of chronological scrutiny, hence they are well worth considering".[71]

Not questioning the validity of Pargiter's observation it may be pointed out that although it is true that the first three subjects are not valuable for empirical history, nevertheless they provide a grand sweep to the concept of history, a sweep which strongly reminds one of the Christian idea of history which encompasses all empirical events within a single all comprehensive framework of divine plan.[72] Similarly, the Puranic framework of creation and dissolution within which the *vamsa* and *vamsamucharita* have their existence give all empirical events a meaningful perspective and from that point of view these three subjects *sarga, pratisarga, manvantara* are highly valuable. They provide a synthetic framework and try to look at empirical events from the point of view of totality and not piecemeal.

This grand cosmological scheme which provides the comprehensive framework for empirical events is exemplified in the theory of *yugantara* and *manvantara. Kalpajokti* seems to have denoted the same thing, the transitions of the vast cosmic-time cycles.[73] *Yugantara* denotes a cycle of four great successive ages (*yugas*). *Krita, treta, dvapara, kali*, charting a course of progressive decline, moral as well as biological. Seventy one of such four age periods (*krita* to *kali*) made up a *manvantara*.[74]

The Puranic theory of the decline from the *pristine* golden age of *krita* through *treta* and *dvapara* to the *kali* is generally similar

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to the Buddhist theory of the origin of civil society[75] and it probably points to a common original source from which both the Buddhist as well as the Puranic theories have developed.[76] The general pattern is the same; the decline begins with the beginning of avarice, selfishness, conflict and violence. It is not only moral degeneration but also physical; even the physical stature of men dwindles.

The Puranic view of progressive decline is found in several works but most elaborate accounts are found notably in the *Vayu-purana*[77]. The *Santiparvan* in the *Mahabharata* gives practically the same account.[78] The *Santiparvan* explains how in the *krita* age there was at first no state, but eventually passion and greed developed among men, consequently Brahma invented the state and government. The Puranic tradition places the beginning of corruption and division of society not in the *krita* but after its end in the early *treta*. According to the *Vayu-purana* account after the development of agriculture during the *treta* which led to the appropriation of property, Brahma created state and gave Kshatriyas the right to rule.

A.K. Warder finds in this account an echo of the transition from the food gathering to food producing economy. Warder further feels that the original version of the theory placed the beginning of agriculture and state during the *treta*. This was later modified by Brahmanical editors in order to place the beginning of kingship in the most perfect age, the *krita* itself and accommodate a number of kings in that age. On account of their bias against kingless republican societies, the royalist authors, according to Warder, were unable to bear the idea that the most perfect age in human evolution should have been the age when there was no king and no state.[79]

Historical time in the *puranas* was conceived at two levels. Level one comprised of '*sarga*' and '*pratisarga*', the cycle of 'creation' and 'dissolution and re-creation'. Time works havoc with the world making it old, dirty and polluted. It can be regenerated only by calling into existence the beginning of time, the recreation of the world anew (*pratisarga*) after the dissolution of the old.[80] The cycle

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of *sarga* and *pratisarga* keeps on recurring weaving the fundamental pattern of history, the succession of a series of remorseless decline from *krita* to *kali* to *pralaya*. Running through these cycles of *sarga* and *pratisarga* exists the second level, the time spanning the *vamsas* and *vamsanucharitas*, the genealogies of gods and sages and the accounts of royal dynasties. It is the *vamsas* and *vamsanucharitas* which provide focal points and centres to the drifting sands of time lending the process its meaning and significance. In the overarching theme of drift and decline, the *vamsa, manvantara* and *vamsanucharita* provide some footholds, however, precarious and transitory they may be, in the total scheme. At the second level, periodisation is made on the basis of *manvantaras* (cycles of *manus*) and *vamsanucharita* (dynastic accounts). The frame here is predominantly political.

History in the *puranas* is also divided into the 'history of the past' and the 'history of future', the *kaliyuga* being the dividing line.[81] The coupling of the past and future is not a feature typical of the Puranic perception alone. It is also found, for example, in the *Jatakas* where stories are divided into those pertaining to *atitavatthu* and to *paccupannavatthu*.[82] The comparison may be extended further. In the early Christian concept, history is divided into two halves, the birth of Christ constituting the dividing line, the history of 'old dispensation' and the history of 'New dispensation', the first being the preparation for the coming of Christ and the second embodying the consequences of the birth of Christ.[83]

By the time the Puranic literature developed and proliferated, the old Vedic suspicion of and hostility towards historical concerns seem to have gone down substantially. In fact, the prestige and authority of the *puranas* came to rank next only to the *Vedas*. The *puranas* came to be regarded as complementary and aid to the proper understanding of the *Vedas*. "The *Dvija* who may know the four *Vedas* with the *Angas* and *Upanishads*, should not really be (regarded) as having attained proficiency, if he should not thoroughly know the *Purana*. He should reinforce the *Veda* with the *Itihasa* and *Purana*. The *Veda* is afraid of the little learned man

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thinking 'he will injure me".[84] The heavy theistic embellishments in the Puranic literature might have also contributed to the melting away of the old hostility towards historical compositions.

Judged by modern canons of historical study, the *puranas* are found wanting in cogency and reliability as historical works. However, it should be noted that the value of *puranas* as historical documents for certain ruling houses has been accepted by even such a sceptical scholar as V. Smith.[85] Pargiter and Morton Smith made praise-worthy endeavour to vindicate Puranic dynastic accounts as genuine history.[86] *Puranas* may be judged to be poor history by modern measure, but they embody a philosophy of history which may serve as an interesting foil to the modern notion of history. After all philosophy of history in the deepest sense is nothing but a philosophy of life, a vision, a search for the essence of the universe and man's place and destiny in that universe. This quest naturally has to go beyond mere empiricism. *Puranas* were avowedly not history in the modern sense where history is regarded as a product of empiricism, a record of empirical facts. *Puranas* represent a world view manifesting itself through the narration of past events, events that are worth remembering and recording, events where men attained heroic proportions and achieved practically the stature of the divine and thus sublimated the remorseless wheel of time from *krita* to *kali*.

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4. Nyaya-Vaiseshika systems can be cited as obvious examples.
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8. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index,* Delhi 1967, I, p. 225, II, p. 316.
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11. *Asvalayana Grihyasutra,* 1.14.6-7.
12. *Sat. Br.* X. 6.5.9; Br. Up. VI.3.14.
13. The word *Itihasa* was formed from *iti ha asa,* this is what it was and signified *puravritta,* E. Seig, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics,* VII, p. 461; *Itihasa/Itihasa-purana* was called *Veda,* usually the fifth *Veda, Sat. Br.* XIII. 4.3.12; *Ch Up.* VII. 1.2; the *Milindapanha* ed. V. Trencker *London* 1928, p. 10 uses the expression *itihasapanchama.*
14. *Vedic Index* I. p. 445.
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18. *Kathaka Samhita* XIV, 5.
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29. *Chandogyaupanisad* VII 1.2 combines *Itihasa* and *Purana* to constitute the fifth Veda. *Gopatha Brahmana* 1.10 speaks both of *Itihasaveda* and *Puranaveda* Cf. *Sankhayayana Srauta Sutra* XVI. 2.21.27; *Sat. Br.* XII. 4.3.12.13.
30. S.N. Roy, *Historical and Cultural Studies in the Puranas,* Allahabad 1978, pp. 9-10.
31. Ghoshal, *op. cit.,* p. 17. The general opinion of early authorities thus identify creation accounts with Purana.

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32. Winternitz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 519. Date of Kautilya's *Arthasastra* continues to be debated. Many scholars accept the tradition that Kautilya was the Chancellor of Chandragupta Maurya.
33. The training programme is detailed in *Arthsastra* chapters 1.5-7. For text and translation of the *Arthasastra* we have used R.P. Kangle, *Kautiliya Arthasastra* Pt. I & II, Bombay 1969, 1972.
34. *Artha.* 1.4.13.
35. *Artha.* 1.4.14.
36. *Artha.* 1.6.
37. For *Akhyana* and *Akhyayika* see V.S. Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-9 and *Vedic Index*, I. pp. 52, 77. Bana's *Harshacharita* is called *Akhyayika*, see Pathak, pp. 14, 26-29.
38. *Sat. Br.* XIII. 4.3.15.
39. Pathak, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
40. Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 26ff, 36-37, 84-85.
41. F.E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, Delhi 1972, Chapters I, XXV, XXVI.
42. The concept of history in the *Arthasastra* thus was surprisingly liberal and modern.
43. *Artha.* 1.5.7-14.
44. The value of learning is not just an academic or intellectual luxury. Learning is of practical value for disciplining character and conduct. "From (continuous) study ensues a (trained) intellect, from intellect (comes) practical application, (and) from practical application (results) self-possession; such is the efficacy of sciences", Artha 1.5.16 Kangle Pt. II, p. 11.
45. "Control over the senses, which is motivated by training in the sciences should be secured by giving up lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance and foolhardiness. Absence of improper indulgence in (the pleasures of) sound, touch, colour, taste and smell by the senses of hearing, touch and sight, the tongue and the sense of smell means control over the senses, or, the practice of (this) science (gives such control). For, the whole of this science means control over senses". *Artha* 1.6.1-3; Kangle, *op. cit.*, II, p. 12.
46. *Artha.* 1.6.4-12.
47. Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-29.
48. *Harshacharita*, Intro., verse 10; Pathak, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
49. See above not 39; Winternitz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 317, n. 1 and pp. 37ff.
50. Winternitz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 311-316.

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51. *Vishnu Purana*, III. 6, 15. See also Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 21 especially note 13.
52. Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 17.
53. *Upavrimhana* was the process through which fresh material was added.
54. See note 41 above.
55. Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-28.
56. *Vayu Purana*, 1.31-32. cf. *Padma Purana* V.1. 27-28.
57. *Garga Samhita*, Golokakhanda, Referred by Pargiter, *op. cit.*, p. 17, n. 2; S.N. Roy, *Historical and Cultural Studies in the Puranas*, Allahabad 1978, p. 20.
58. *Artha.* III 7. 28-29.
59. Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-17, 21-26.
60. *Chandogya Upanisad*, III, 3.4; III. 4.1-2.
61. Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-17.
62. Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.
63. Pargiter, *op. cit.*, pp. 24, 36-37. The line of argument of Pargiter that originally the *Puranas* were the works of professional sutas untouched by Brahmanical influence is not acceptable to many scholars. We have noted above Pathak's opinion that *Pauranika sutas* were originally Brahmanas. Moreover, the original compiler of the *Puranasamhita*, Krishna Dvaipayana was a Brahmana. This would also go against Pargiter's theory.
64. Winternitz thinks that religious and didactic matters formed parts of original *Puranas* and that old traditions about creation, deeds of gods, heroes, saints, etc., were added to the original *dharma* works to produce Puranic literature, Winternitz, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 518-21.
65. *Brahmanda Purana* II 34.21, *Vayu Purana* 60.21, *Visnu Purana* II. 6.16.
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68. See above notes 63, 64.
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DISCUSSIONS

Subhash Kak

The Chemist and the Grammarian

Solid state electronics, which has revolutionized modern life, arises from the unique property of silicon and germanium in that their electrical behaviour changes dramatically when substituted atoms are introduced in their crystal lattices. Another widely used solid state material is gallium which is used in light emitting diodes and other devices. It is an amusing sidelight of history of chemistry that the original names of gallium and germanium were *eka-aluminum* and *eka-silicon*, where the *eka*, Sanskrit for *one*, was used by Mendeleev, the formulator of the periodic table of elements, as representing *beyond*. The prediction for the existence of these elements was made by Mendeleev in a paper in 1869, and it was the identification of these elements in 1875 and 1886 that made him famous, and led to the general acceptance of his research. In all, Mendeleev gave Sanskrit names to eight elements. This note presents the connection between the Sanskrit tradition and the crucial insight that led him to his discovery.

1. Introduction

Mendeleev's periodic table of elements, formulated in 1869, is one of the major conceptual advances in the history of science. Dmitri Mendeleev (1834–1907) arranged in the table the 63 known elements based on atomic weight, which he published in his article "On the relationship of the properties of the elements

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to their atomic weights".[1] He left space for new elements, and predicted three yet-to-be-discovered elements including *eka-silicon* and *eka-boron.*

Mendeleev was born at Tobolsk, Siberia, and educated in St. Petersburg. He was appointed to a professorship in St. Petersburg (1863) and in 1866 he succeeded to the chair of chemistry in the university. His work on the periodic table was soon recognized since he predicted the existence and properties of new elements and indicated that some accepted atomic weights of the then known elements were in error. His table was an improvement on the classification by Beguyer de Chancourtois and Newlands and was published a year before the work of Lothar Meyer.

The earlier attempts at classification had considered some two-dimensional schemes, but they remained arbitrary in their conception. Mendeleev's main contribution was his insistence that the two-dimensional arrangement was comprehensive. In this he appears to have been inspired by the comprehensive two-dimensional arrangement of Sanskrit sounds, which he indirectly acknowledges in his naming scheme.

2. Mendeleev's 1869 Paper and Later Work

Here is an English translation of his brief paper: "By ordering the elements according to increasing atomic weight in vertical rows so that the horizontal rows contain analogous elements, still ordered by increasing atomic weight, one obtains the following arrangement, from which a few general conclusions may be derived.

Table 1: Mendeleev's 1869 periodic table

Ti = 50	Zr = 90	? = 180
V = 51	Nb = 94	Ta = 182
Cr = 52	Mo = 96	W = 186
Mn = 55	Rh = 104, 4	Pt = 197, 4
Fe = 56	Ru = 104, 4	Ir = 198

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Ni = Co + 59	Pd = 106, 6	Os = 199		
H = 1	Cu = 63, 4	Ag = 108	Hg = 200	
Be = 9, 4	Mg = 24	Zn = 65, 2	Cd = 112	
B = 11	Al = 27, 4	? = 68	Ur = 116	Au = 197?
C = 12	Si = 28	? = 70	Sn = 118	
N = 14	P = 31	As = 75	Sb = 122	Bi = 210?
O = 16	S = 32	Se = 79, 4	Te = 128?	
F = 19	Cl = 35, 5	Br = 80	J = 127	
Li = 9	Na = 23	K = 39	Rb = 85, 4	Cs = 133 Tl = 204
	Ca = 40	Sr = 87, 6	Ba = 137	Pb = 207
	? = 45	Ce = 92		
	?Er = 56	La = 94		
	?Yt = 60	Di = 95		
	?In = 75, 6	Th = 118?		

1. The elements, if arranged according to their atomic weights, exhibit a periodicity of properties.
2. Chemically analogous elements have either similar atomic weights (Pt, Ir, Os), or weights which increase by equal increments (K, Rb, Cs).
3. The arrangement according to atomic weight corresponds to the *valence* of the element and to a certain extent the difference in chemical behavior, for example Li, Be, B, C, N, O, F.
4. The elements distributed most widely in nature have *small* atomic weights, and all such elements are marked by the distinctness of their behavior. They are, therefore, the *representative* elements; and so the lightest element H is rightly chosen as the most representative.
5. The *magnitude* of the atomic weight determines the properties of the element. Therefore, in the study of compounds, not only the quantities and properties of the elements and their reciprocal behavior is to be taken into consideration, but also the *atomic weight* of the elements. Thus the compounds of S and Tl [Te was intended], Cl and J, display not only many analogies, but also striking differences.
6. One can predict the discovery of many *new* elements, for example analogues of Si and Al with atomic weights of 65–75.

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7. A few atomic weights will probably require correction; for example Te cannot have the atomic weight 128, but rather 123–126.
8. From the above table, some new analogies between elements are revealed. Thus Bo (?) [apparently Ur was intended] appears as an analogue of Bo and Al, as is well known to have been long established experimentally."

Mendeleev's textbook, *Osnovy Khimii* (*Principles of Chemistry*; first edition, 1871), described his table at greater length. The full list of his predicted elements together with the Sanskrit names he chose is given in Table 2.

Table 2: The full list of Mendeleev's Predictions with their Sanskrit Names

Mendeleev's Given Name	Modern Name
Eka-aluminium	Gallium
Eka-boron	Scandium
Eka-silicon	Germanium
Eka-manganese	Technetium
Tri-manganese	Rhenium
Dvi-tellurium	Polonium
Dvi-caesium	Francium
Eka-tantalum	Protactinium

Julius Lothar Meyer (1830-1985) published his classic paper of 1870[2] that also presented the periodicity of atomic volume plotted against atomic weight. Meyer and Mendeleev carried on a long drawn-out dispute over priority. But it was Mendeleev's predictions of yet-unknown elements that secured his fame. The most famous of these predictions was for *eka*-silicon (germanium) for which not only did he postulate its existence, but also its properties in its chloride and oxide combinations. Below are excerpts from his paper "A natural system of the elements and its use in predicting the properties of undiscovered elements" in

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the *Journal of the Russian Chemical Society,* 3: 25-56 (1871), where he made predictions regarding *eka-boron* (scandium).

Among the ordinary elements, the *lack* of a number or *analogues of boron and aluminum* is very striking, that is, in group III, and it is certain that we lack an element of this group immediately following aluminum; this must be found in the even, or second, series, immediately after potassium and calcium. Since the atomic weights of these latter are near 40, and since then in this row the element of group IV, titanium, Ti = 50, follows, then the atomic weight of the missing element should be nearly 45. Since this element belongs to an even series, it should have more basic properties than the lower elements of group III, boron or aluminum, that is, its oxide, R_2O_3, should be a stronger base.... I have decided to give this element the preliminary name of *ekaboron,* deriving the name from this, that it follows boron as the first element of the even group, and the syllable *eka* comes from the Sanskrit word meaning "one." Eb = 45. *Ekaboron* should be a metal with an atomic volume of about 15, because in the elements of the second series, and in all the even series, the atomic volume falls quickly as we go from the first group to the following ones. Actually, the volume of potassium is nearly 50, calcium nearly 25, titanium and vanadium nearly 9, and chromium, molybdenum, and iron nearly 7; thus the specific gravity of the metal should be close to 3.0, since its atomic weight is 45. The metal will be nonvolatile, because all the metals in the even series of all the groups (except group I) are nonvolatile; hence it can hardly be discovered by the ordinary method of spectrum analysis. It should not decompose water at ordinary temperature, but at somewhat raised temperatures it should decompose it, as do many other metals of this series which form basic oxides. Finally, it will dissolve in acids. Its chloride $EbCl_3$ (perhaps Eb_2Cl_3), should be a volatile substance but a salt, since it corresponds to a basic oxide. Water will act on it as it does on the chlorides of calcium and magnesium, that is, ekaboron chloride will be a hygroscopic body and will be able to evolve hydrogen chloride without having the character of a hydrochloride. Since the volume of calcium chloride = 49 and

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that of titanium chloride = 109, the volume of ekaboron chloride should be close to 78, and therefore its specific gravity will probably be about 2.0 *Ekaboron oxide*, Eb_2O_3, should be a nonvolatile substance and probably should not fuse; it should be insoluble in water, because even calcium oxide is very slightly soluble in water, but it will probably dissolve in acid. Finally, *ekaboron* will not form metalloorganic compounds, since it is one of the metals of an even series.

3. The Sanskrit Tradition and Mendeleev's Discovery

There are a couple of theories about why Mendeleev should have used a Sanskrit prefix. According to Professor Paul Kiparsky of Stanford University, Mendeleev was a friend and colleague of the Sanskritist Bohtlingk, who was preparing the second edition of his book of Panini at about this time, and Mendeleev wished to honour Panini with his nomenclature. Noting that there are striking similarities between the Periodic Table and the introductory Maheúvara or Siva Sutras in Panini's grammar, Kiparsky says:[3]

> [T]he analogies between the two systems are striking. Just as Panini found that the phonological patterning of sounds in the language is a function of their articulatory properties, so Mendeleev found that the chemical properties of elements are a function of their atomic weights. Like Panini, Mendeleev arrived at his discovery through a search for the "grammar" of the elements (using what he called the principle of isomorphism, and looking for general formulas to generate the possible chemical compounds). Just as Panini arranged the sounds in order of increasing phonetic complexity (e.g. with the simple stops k, p.. preceding the other stops, and representing all of them in expressions like kU, pU) so Mendeleev arranged the elements in order of increasing atomic weights, and called the first row (oxygen, nitrogen, carbon etc.) "typical (or representative) elements". Just as Panini broke the phonetic parallelism of sounds

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when the simplicity of the system required it, e.g. putting the velar to the right of the labial in the nasal row, so Mendeleev gave priority to isomorphism over atomic weights when they conflicted, e.g. putting beryllium in the magnesium family because it patterns with it even though by atomic weight it seemed to belong with nitrogen and phosphorus. In both cases, the periodicities they discovered would later be explained by a theory of the internal structure of the elements.

Kiparsky has examined the question of the optimality of the Śiva Sutras elsewhere.[4] He has also noted that Mendeleev and the Sanskritist Bohtlingk were friends.

My own view is that it was not Panini's Śiva Sutras that influenced him, but rather the two-dimensional arrangement of the Sanskrit alphabet (*varnamala*). The tabular form of the Sanskrit letters is due to the two parameters (point of articulation and aspiration) at the basis of the sounds, and Mendeleev must have recognized that ratios/valency and atomic weight likewise defined a two-dimensional basis for the elements.

Convinced that the analogy was fundamental, Mendeleev theorized that the gaps that lay in his table must correspond to undiscovered elements. For his predicted eight elements, he used the prefixes of *eka, dvi,* and *tri* (Sanskrit *one, two, three*) in their naming.

It should be recognized that some of the most brilliant European minds studied Sanskrit in the nineteenth century, and philology and natural science papers were published in the same proceedings of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, as at other academies. The paths of Böhtlingk and Mendeleev crossed in many ways: Mendeleev lectured at the Academy when he was awarded its Demidov prize for his book *Organic Chemistry*, which had appeared in 1861, when Böhtlingk was on the nomination committee for the prize.

The two-dimensional regular representation of Sanskrit sounds must have been well known to Mendeleev. By using Sanskrit names, he was tipping his hat to the Sanskrit grammarians

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of yore, who had created astonishingly sophisticated theories of language based on their discovery of the two-dimensional patterns in basic sounds.

It should be mentioned that Indian physical ideas considered all matter to be created of the same indestructible atoms, which combines in diverse ways to generate different substances. The objective elements of the physical world are characterized by substance, quality, and action. There is a further characterization in terms of non-reactive and reactive properties.[5]

In one of the Indian conceptions, two atoms combine to form a binary molecule, and two, three, four or more binary molecules combine into grosser molecules of different substances. The other view is that atoms form dyads and triads directly to form molecules of different substances. Atoms possess an incessant vibratory motion.

Molecules can also break up under the influence of heat. Heat and light rays are taken to consist of very small particles of high velocity. Being particles, their velocity is finite. The particles of heat and light can be endowed with different characteristics and so heat and light can be of different kinds. Atomism was at the basis of Indian chemistry and physics, and these ideas must have found a resonance in Mendeleev's mind.

Postscript

Mendeleev anticipated Andrews' concept (1869) of the critical temperature of gases. He also investigated the thermal expansion of liquids, and studied the nature and origin of petroleum. He was considered one of the greatest teachers of his time. In 1890 he resigned his professorship and in 1893 became director of the bureau of weights and measures in St. Petersburg, where he remained until his death in 1907.

In 1913, almost fifty years after Mendeleev, Henry Moseley (1887–1915) measured the wavelengths of the X-ray spectral lines of many elements, showing that the ordering of the wavelengths of the X-ray emissions coincided with the ordering of the elements

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by atomic number. With the discovery of isotopes of the elements, it became apparent that atomic mass was not the significant player in the periodic law as Mendeleev, Meyers and others had proposed, but rather, the properties of the elements varied periodically with atomic number. But the modified table has continued to be called after Mendeleev.

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Comment on 'Mendeleev and The Periodic Table of Elements' by Subhash Kak

The author has attempted in this article to throw some light on the missing elements as conceptualized and predicted by Mendeleev in his Periodic Table of Elements (1869), vis-à-vis the use of Sanskrit 'names' (*eka, div* and *tri*) as prefixes to indicate the projected new element. It would have been better, in fact accurate, had the author indicated them as *saṇkhyā*, instead of stating them as Sanskrit 'names' for the new elements. It may be noted that the number-words in Russian language for 2 to 7 are more or less similar to Sanskrit *saṇkhyā*, while for one, the Russian word is *ajin*, the etymology of which is a debatable one. Mendeleev, however, used *eka* (the Sanskrit *saṇkhyā* for *one*) and acknowledged that the 'syllable *eka* comes from the Sanskrit word meaning 'one'. Out of the eight yet-to-be-discovered elements, he prefixed *eka*—to five of them—*eka*-aluminum (now known as Gallium); *eka*-boron (Scandium); *eka*-silicon Germanium); *eka*-manganese (Technetium); and *eka*-Tantalum (Protactinium). As for the other three elements, Mendeleev used the prefix *dvi* for two, and *tri* for one missing element. Subhash Kak has not explained in detail as to why these *saṇkhyās*, were also used instead of *eka*, which he says has also the sense of 'beyond'.

As regards the possible influence of Śiva Sūtras in Pāṇiṇi's grammar, the views of Kiparsky and Kak are divergent. But the latter's statement that: "It is more plausible that he (Mendeleev) noted the comprehensiveness of the two-dimensional arrangement of the Sanskrit alphabet (*Varṇamālā*) which is apparent to

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even an elementary student of the language" is not convincing. In definitive history of science, the use of phrases like 'might have provided', 'must have recognised' (p. 8) do not carry the weight of proper historiography.

As regards Kak's references to Indian Atomic tradition, (p. 8), it is not only disjointed but also needs clarification. It would be an oversimplification to put forward the idea that 'Indian Physical ideas considered all matter to be created of the *same* indestructive atoms". It needs to be recognised that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika atomism deals with four different types of atoms corresponding to the four elements (*pṛthivī, ap, tejas* and *vāyu*); likewise the *Śautrāntika* Buddhists.

I am not sure whether the author has adduced historically valid reasons why Mendeleev chose Sanskrit 'names' (sic). It is likely that, since the Sanskritic *dvi* and *tri* are akin to Russian words for numbers two and three respectively, and, for uniformity, Mendeleev thought of the Sanskrit *saṇkhyā eka* for one? The answer is debatable.

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Śaṁkara and Nāgārjuna: Two Philosophical Perspectives with Reference to Modern Age

Modern Age, as we all know, is not only the age of science and technology but is specifically known as the nuclear age. The possible misuse of nuclear weapons is a constant threat to the very existence of mankind. The main factor behind such misuse can be the same human mind that is at the root of all the glorious discoveries and inventions with which the modern age is credited, including that of nuclear power. Threat comes from the side of human fanaticism and bigotry, dogmatism and intolerance, and this threat is not a minor or a casual one. There is a constant threat of nuclear war under whose shadow we live, move and have our being. We have to understand and assess the contribution of Śaṁkara and Nāgārjuna in this background. Now, corresponding to this threat of nuclear war, due mainly to human bigotry and intolerance, there is also a threat of complete chaos, confusion, instability, uncertainty and a sort of unpredictability governing the human conduct at large in a society which is gradually crumbling to pieces, so to say, without any sustaining principle and we are confronted with erosion of human values at every step. Spencer Johnson's bestseller *Who moved my cheese?* which has recently been popular with millions of Americans and is regarded as an instant classic points to the inevitability of change, and wisdom consisting in accepting and anticipating it. Even in an area where the word 'change' is on most individual lips, many are very uncomfortable

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with it. One of the characters in this book laments "I wanted to stay in familiar territory; the truth is I did not want to deal with change; I did not even want to see it".

Now, we have to understand Śaṁkara and Nāgārjuna in this background. What Śaṁkara first and foremost gave us is a unique philosophy of the advaita or non-duality which, at least he and his followers thought, would be a foundation for integration and harmony, *samanvaya*, and could provide us with stable human values, making adequate room for *bhakti, jñāna and karma* and also for all our personal as well as social obligations, religious as well as secular, in their spheres as *lokavyavahāra*. In advaita, non-duality is always and constantly realized as the *paramārtha tattva*, that which is really there as the unchanging and unavoidable link, so to say, pervading everything and everywhere. It is this advaita *tattva*, as a matter of fact, whose realization according to Śaṁkara can bring about not only integration and harmony among all our diverse and even at times extremely opposite views upheld by us in *vyavahāra*, at the practical plane, but it can also make us much more tolerant of and much more understanding about views, both religious and secular, opposed to our own. It is thus that advaita is supposed to transcend the opposites. It is supposed not only to transcend the opposition of views on the level of *dvaita* or duality, rather in a sense advaita, properly understood, is supposed to transcend the so-called *dvaita-advaita*, the *vyavahāra–paramārtha* dichotomy. Here lies the peculiar strength of advaita. To my mind, the theory of advaita does not annul the *dvaita* in its own sphere, but it only points out that advaita being the *paramārtha*, the *dvaita* or duality needs to be understood only as *loka-vyavahāra*, something that is already there, for it is not *tuccha* but it is not the ultimate truth either and that's all. Mutual infightings and bickerings, etc., would be the natural and inevitable fate, according to Śaṁkara, of the *dvaita* if it is insisted upon as the *paramārtha*. Well, the advaita *tattva*, when properly understood, is not opposed to any duality whatever. Gauḍapāda says in his Māṇḍūkya-kārikā's advaita *prakaraṇa*,

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sva-siddhānta-vyavasthāsu dvaitino niścitā dṛḍhaṃ,
parasparaṃ virudhyante taiḥ ayaṃ na virudhyate.

Commenting on this kārikā, Ācārya Śaṁkara points out,

taiḥ anyonivirodhibhiḥ asmadīōyaṁ vaidikaḥ
śarvānanyatvāt ātmaikatvadarśana-pakṣo na virudhyate
yathā sva-hasta-padādibhiḥ.

At another place Śaṁkara points out in his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā,*

tataḥ paramārhato brahmavit ātmaiva dvaitīnāṃ.

That is, one who realizes Brahman is the very self of the dualists, those who are opposed to it.

tenāyaṃ hetunā asmad-pakṣo na virudhyate taiḥ.

This shows that Śaṁkara was for harmony and integration, for *samanvaya,* which is the greatest need of the hour and advaita, properly understood, should promote mutual tolerance and understanding. To me it appears that Bādarāyaṇa's well-known *Brahma-sūtra* '*tattu samanvayāt*' (the fourth *sūtra* of the first *adhyāya* first *pāda*) can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to Śaṁkara's philosophy of advaita itself. There is *samanvaya* galore in Śaṁkara's philosophy of advaita itself. There is *samanvaya* in Śaṁkara, even in the purely religious plane and it is evident from the different varieties of *stotras* authored by him, where the *vaiṣṇava, śaiva* and even different *śākta* cults are taken care of. He does not hesitate to designate *Mahāmāyā* as *Para-brahma-mahiṣi,* 'the queen of the supreme Brahman', insofar as he is taken here in the sense of supreme godhead. I am referring to that beautiful *śloka* in the *Saundarya-Laharī,*

Girām āhur devīīm druhina-grhiṇīṃ āgamavido,
hareḥ patnīṃ padmāṃ hara-sahacarīṃ-adritanayāṃ;

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turīyā kāpi tvaṃ duradhigama-niḥsīma-mahimā
mahāmāyā viśvaṃ bhramayasi parabrahma-mahiṣi

We find nowadays, in India, many so-called religious preachers being designated and given the title of *samanvayācārya*, title bestowed on them by some organization or the other, whether it is in Kāśī or elsewhere, that is immaterial. But it was Śaṁkara who is first and foremost really among them whose advaita *tattva* is not only conducive to the *samanvaya* of the religious and the secular, it is also conducive to the *samanvaya* of the 'isms' based on our particular likes and dislikes originating from our diverse commitments. Is it not a fact that bringing out *samanvaya* or harmony is one of the greatest needs of the day, of the modern age? One word of caution here. One need not be so naive as to think that mere reference to advaita would solve all our miseries and in any case it goes without saying that an advocacy of *advaita-vāda* as against the *dvaita* cannot bring about harmony and integration, *samanvaya*, by a fiat or a miracle as it were. What is being asserted here is that there is this tendency towards harmony and integration, *samanvaya*, in the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṃkara in ample measures which can be worked out by us for promoting tolerance, understanding and integration in our age as per our needs, of course.

Now, coming to Nāgārjuna, we find that his *śūnyavāda* has been a much misunderstood philosophy in the history of human thought, just as the advaita vedānta of Śaṁkara has been misunderstood. Śaṁkara should be regarded as a *brahmavādin* and not as *māyāvadin*. As the advaita vedānta of Śaṁkara has been misunderstood at times deliberately, I should say, as promoting the view that the world does not exist, that the world is *māyā* in the sense of being non-existent even on the practical plane; similarly Nāgārjuna has been misunderstood at times deliberately, I should say once again, as promoting the view of *śūnyatā* or void in a literal sense. For Nāgārjuna, *śūnyatā* is identical with *pratītyasamutpāda*.

vayaṃ na nāstikāḥ pratītyasamutpādavādino hi mādhyamikāḥ.

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This is Candrakīrti in his *Prasannapadā*. As we all know, or are supposed to know, for Nāgārjuna *śūnyata* is identical with *pratītyasamutpāda* and with *madhyamā pratipat*, the famous middle path of the Buddha, the enlightened one. The famous kārikā to this effect is,

> *yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tāṃ pracakṣmahe,*
> *sā prajñaptirupādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā.*

This kārikā of Nāgārjuna should dispel once and for all our misconceptions that for Nāgārjuna *śūnyatā* is just a void in a literal sense.

Why do we simply ignore the kārikā that points out that the *tattva* should not be called *śunya*, or *aśūnya*, or both *śūnya* and *aśūnya*, or neither of the two?

> *śūnyaṃ iti na vaktavyaṃ aśūnyaṃ iti vā bhavet,*
> *ubhayaṃ nobhyam ceti prajñapty arthaṃ tu kathyate.*

It is *catuṣkoṭi-vinirmukta*, as is well known. Once again there is another fear, of which we must steer clear. It is to be noted that *tattva* here does not refer to any absolute reality either, in Nāgārjuna's philosophy. Following the footsteps of Candrakīrti, the great commentator of the *prāsaṅgika mādhyamika* school, I would say that Nāgārjuna has no ontology of his own to grind. In any case, there is no ontology here like that of the advaita Brahman or if at all we want to stick to it we may say, that there is only a tenuous ontology, referring to *śūnyatā* as *niḥsvabhāvatā*. The most important point is that it is *niḥsvabhāva*. Nāgārjuna says,

> *tathāgato niḥsvabhāvo nihsvabhāvamidam jagat.*

Once this *niḥsvabhāvatā*, which I understand as 'essencelessness', of everything, all *dharmas*, is realized there is nothing else left to be realized, in Nāgārjuna's philosophy. *Śūnyatā* is *sarva-dṛṣṭi-prahāṇa*, a rejection going beyond all dogmatic views and once this is done

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there is enlightenment, or *prajñā-pāramitā*, leading to *nirvāṇa*. It is not that a reality or an absolute of an altogether different order hidden behind or transcending the appearances is grasped in *prajñā* but it is like something getting revealed, in this case *niḥsvabhāvatā* being revealed in our understanding of things that has been all the while there unnoticed by us. It is our understanding here that makes all the difference and that is why Nāgārjuna points out in very clear tèrms that there is not the slightest difference between saṁsāra and nirvāṇa.

na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kincit asti viśeṣaṇaṃ,
na nirvāṇasya saṁsārāt kincit asti viśeṣaṇaṃ,
nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ koṭiḥ saṁsaraṇasya ca,
na tayoḥ antaraṃ kiṅcit susukṣmamapi vidyate.

There is absolutely no distinction, says Nāgārjuna. The last *kārikā* of Nāgārjuna in his *Mula madhyamaka kārikā* runs as follows:

sarva-dṛṣṭi-prahāṇāya yaḥ sad dharmamadeśayat,
anukaṃpām-upādāya taṃ namasyāmi Gautamaṃ.

The term *anukaṁpā* has been used here and also *sarva-dṛṣṭi-prahāṇāya*. All dogmatic views have to be destroyed and at the same time *śūnyatā* itself is not to be adhered to as another view. This also is no less important. That is why the following kārikā also is important:

śūnyatā sarva-dṛṣṭīnāṃ proktā niḥsaraṇaṃ jinaiḥ,
yeṣāṃ tu śūnyatā dṛṣṭiḥ tān asādhyān babhāṣire.

Incurable are they, says Nāgārjuna, who turn *śūnyatā* into a dogmatic view, a dogmatic stand, a theory to be adhered to, when what really *śūnyatā* is meant for is quite different. It is meant only to do away with all dogmatic views by bringing about the realization through the *catuṣ-koṭi tarka* or the dialectic that everything, all dharmas, are devoid of essence or *svabhāva*. Śāntideva in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* also clearly admonishes,

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śūnyatāyāṃ api na abhiniveśaḥ kartavyaḥ.

One should not be dogmatically attached even to *śūnyatā* as a theory or as a view. Such thorough-going attack on esentialism is really unique and Nāgārjuna claims that this was the real intention of Buddha. One may be inclined to remember here the vehement attack on essentialism launched in contemporary western thought by Ludwig Wittgenstein. It would be well to remember at the same time that both the problem at hand and the procedure adopted by these two masterminds were far from being the same. Clinging to essences creates delusions in the form of all sorts of thought-constructions, *kalpanās*, leading to miseries. Non-clinging alone gives us deliverance from the same. In *Prasannapadā* Candrakīrti says,

niravaśeṣa kalpanā-kṣaya-rūpaṃ eva nirvāṇaṃ.

This *kalpanā-kṣaya* is very important.

Now, let us come to the practical implications. What would be the practical implications of such a unique philosophical enterprise for our modern age? It goes without saying that the practical implications of philosophical enterprises like those of Nāgārjuna cannot be demonstrated in the same way and in the same sense as in the case of scientific theories. However, the impact of *śūnyatā*, when properly understood, cannot be set aside in both the personal life of the individual and the society, and therefore it should be taken with some seriousness. There will be little inclination for indulging in unending conflicts on account of it, i.e. on account of the self-centred existence arising out of a dogmatic and desperate clinging to the delusion of immutable essences. This by itself could be conducive to peace based on tolerance of each others' views. This makes clear its very vital differences from prescriptions given by the present day popular business publishing sensations like 'Who moved my cheese' for adapting oneself to and even anticipating change, howsoever unpleasant or uncomfortable it may be. There is a vital difference

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between such prescriptions, such popular sensations and the *śūnyatā* philosophy of Nāgārjuna which not only gives us the requisite adaptability to the changing circumstances in our own interest but also leads to *mahākaruṇā*, compassion that aims to cure the ills of humanity at large, so far as it goes. Ninian Smart with all his erudition failed to appreciate this aspect of *śūnyatā* simply because he confused it to be emptiness or nihilism. Smart points out that the emptiness of individuality is disturbing and from this perspective the buddhist teaching is disappointing. How can you really have loving benevolence for empty beings? He writes this in his book *Lights of the world: Buddha and Christ*, published in 1997. When *śūnyatā* is taken as mere emptiness it is no wonder that one fails to fathom how *mahākaruṇā* and *śūnyatā* can go together in Buddhism. Prajñā, however, in the sense of realization of *śūnyatā* as niḥsvabhāvatā, essencelessness, leads to *mahākaruṇā* of the *Bodhisattva*. Nāgārjuna's enterprise thus does not remain a mere theoretical enterprise or a sheer pragmatic concern in a narrow sense as it culminates in the *Bodhisattva* concept of Mahāyāna, just as Śaṁkara's entire exercise finds its culmination in the concept of jīvanmukta

> *samāhita-cetaso yathā bhūtadarśanaṃ bhavati, yathā bhūtadarśino bodhisattvasya sattveṣu mahākaruṇā pravartate.*

One who has realized *śūnyatā* has actually realized what really obtains and is therefore *yathābhūtadarśī*. If he is *yathābhūtadarśī* then the *mahākarunā* comes naturally and spontaneously to the Bodhisattva because he finds that people are rigidly and miserably attached to things that do not have essences in themselves, says *Prajnakaramati* in *Bodhicaryāvatāra pañjikā*. Śaṁkara speaks of *jīvanmukti*; this concept has also been brought in by Prof. Balasubramanian towards the end. It is a very important concept and he has very well explained it through his lectures. Śaṁkara speaks of a *jīvanmukta* as a person who is engaged in the public welfare activities spontaneously just like the spring doing good to

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all by its mere advent; this is in reference to a śloka from the *Vivekacuḍāmaṇi*

> *śantā mahānto nivasanti santo vasantavallokahitaṃ carantaḥ.*

Finally, before concluding it may not be out of place, rather it may be both interesting and illuminating, to compare and contrast certain characteristic aspects of the unique philosophical enterprise of advaita with the relevant aspects of another great school of thought of India, namely that of the mādhyamika school of Buddhism. It is true that Śaṁkara and the mādhyamika thinkers like Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti advocate in some sense conceptual analysis as a method. *Vākyavṛtti* is the very example of this. As a method that ultimately leads to illumination it is significant to note that they very much differ, however, in their conceptions of both analysis and illumination. While there is some sort of absolutist ontology embedded in the very structure of Śaṁkara's philosophical enterprise, the mādhyamika thinkers especially the *prāsaṅgika* mādhyamika take sufficient care to avoid any such ontology to the extent that they are taken as nihilists, which of course, they are not. The remarkable anxiety on the part of the mādhyamika thinkers to see that their philosophical activity should not be misconstrued as nihilism or as absolutism is clear even to a casual reader of their literature. Nāgārjuna's word of caution is quite significant

> *vināśayati durdṛṣṭā śūnyatā mandhamedhasaṃ;*
> *sarpo yathā durgṛhīto vidyā vā duṣprasādhitā.*

The difference with regard to ontology in the case of Śaṁkara and the mādhyamikas is at the root of all other important differences such as enlightenment, etc. The illumination of *prajñā* is different from *brahmānubhava*, from this point of view *brahma-jñāna*. Correspondingly the difference between *nirvāṇa* and *mokṣa* is no less conspicuous. The method of analysis adopted by both also does not follow the same line. Analysis in one case is applied

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to vedāntic statements and we have Śaṁkara's famous statement to that effect

vākyārtha-vicāraṇādhyavasāna nirvrttā hi brahmāvagaiḥ.

Vākyārtha-vicāraṇa for the realization of advaita; while in the other case it is applied to concepts for the realization of essencelessness of concepts as also things, '*vastu-tattva* praivcaya' beyond which there is no other reality left to be realized. And yet there is also remarkable affinity between Śaṁkara and the mādhyamikas which cannot escape our notice. Both of them accept the normal transactions of our day to day life and the ordinary language as sacrosanct in their own sphere.

dve satye samupāśritya buddhānām dharmadeśanā;
loka-saṁvṛti-satyaṃ ca satyaṃ ca parmārthataḥ.

Also, there is Śaṁkara' theory of *loka-vyavahāra.* Not only this, they engage themselves in their respective philosophical enterprises only on the basis of and by the reshaping of the concepts available in the ordinary discourse as is evident from profuse reference to *vyavhāra loka, jana-prasiddhi* and the like in their philosophies. Śaṁkara does this in the case of concepts such as *jñāna* while Candrakīrti does the same with concepts such as *svabhāva.* Śaṁkara takes the concept of *jñāna* and says that *jñāna* must be *samyak-jñāna* and it should not be changing. If something changes, it cannot be called *jñāna* and taking this as the model he comes to *brahmajñāna* as the *jñāna* of the unchanging reality. In the case of mādhyamikas, Candrakīrti points out that *svabhāva* or the essence cannot change if it is truly the essence but because there is change, because there is conditionality or *pratītyasamutpāda* everywhere it cannot be regarded as having any *svabhāva.* He acknowledges *svabhāva* in the practical plane of course. The question was raised in the *Prasannapadā*

nanu gopālāṅganā janaprasiddhametad agnerauṣṇyam-svabhāvamiti.

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That is, "Don't you find that fire is hot; everybody knows it". How do you deny *svabhāva*?

kiṃkhalu asmābhiḥ uktaṁ na prasiddhamiti.

Candrakīrti replies himself. "Did we say that it is not prasiddha, not well-known?", that this *svabhāva* is not there in the practical plane. Then what is it?

nāyaṃ svabhāva bhavitumarhati svabhāva-lakṣaṇa viyuktatvāt.

That is, "Svabhāva should be unchanging" and being *svabhāva*, it should not depend on anything else. Therefore, we say that it is not *svabhāva*. Saṁkara does this in the case of concepts such as *jñāna*. Ordinary *jñāna*, of course, is accepted in Śaṁkara's vedānta. This was in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*—"*nābhāva upalabdheḥ*". Śaṁkara points this out and this was also mentioned by Prof. Balasubramanian in his lectures that the world that we see through our pramāna, the *pratyakṣa*, we cannot simply make it vanish into nothingness by a mere fiat unless you realize Brahman or something like that and even then it does not vanish as if into nothingness. This has also been clearly brought out in *Pañcadaśī*. Throughout *Pañcadaśī* it has also been the effort of the author Vidyāraṇya Swāmī, to show that it is not a question of non-existence or forgetfulness of duality (*na dvaita vismṛtiḥ*) of the world; it is a question of the realization of advaita, that is all. Śaṁkara operates with concepts such as *jñāna* whereas Candrakīrti operates with concepts such as *svabhāva*. In view of and precisely because of such extraordinarily and highly significant reformulations of familiar concepts and ideas, deliberately brought about by what they regard as the inherent logic of these concepts, along with the specific arguments through which the conclusion is arrived at, these enterprises are to be considered as typical examples of genuine philosophical activity even if both Śaṁkara and Nāgārjuna, i.e. the mādhyamikas are averse to speculative metaphysics in some form or the other.

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Sandhān, Vol. IV, No. 2, July–December 2004

Mitu Banerjee

History of Sati—Is It History?

History is replete with incidents relating to violence, self-inflicted or otherwise. Humankind has faced annihilation in all its myriad forms. Interestingly, crime against women has a chronicled past. Right from infant infanticide, female circumcision, dowry deaths, chastity belts to the custom of sati, the female of the species has always been a soft target. Today's methods of subjugation may have changed, but the intention lives on.

As do most of the offences. The Arab world occasionally leaks out sordid polygamous tales related to the *zenana*. Egypt and some such cloistered societies still practise female circumcision. In rural Pakistan, virginity is so highly valued that a proof of the breaking of the hymen is lauded and displayed to all. Also, as a girl is purported to transform into a *Hoor* on dying a virgin, female death row victims are perforce raped so as to not avail of such an exalted position, having sinned on earth.

But violence does not have to be obvious to achieve its objective. Not when there is the phenomena of assisted suicides—sati. India perhaps has the longest history of assisted suicides. Described as *Ichha-Marana* or *desired death*, it is mentioned in ancient Indian epics such as *Mahābhāratā*. The *Sallekhana*, Sati, and Johar systems were essentially suicide mechanisms in ancient (and not so ancient) India. The *Sallekhana* was practiced by devout Jains by fasting and meditation, and the participants starving to death. The most famous person to undergo Sallekhana was the Queen Mother Machikabbe. The sati (aka Suttee) was

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the system in which a widow committed suicide on the funeral pyre of her husband, believing in (or forced into) an eternal marriage. The Johar occurred when the women of a town preferred death to dishonour and committed suicide in large numbers after a war, when no male remained to protect them or their chastity.

History has interesting narratives related to this term. In Hinduism Sati, also called Dakshayani, is one of the daughters of Prasuti and Daksha. She loved Shiva, but her father, Daksha, forbade her marriage to the dark lord. She did so anyway, and Daksha revenged his humiliation by not inviting Shiva to a festival. Sati killed herself by self-immolation on a fire. After Shiva returned and found Sati's body, he killed and decapitated Daksha, later replacing his head with a goat's. Sati was reborn as Pārvati (Pārvati, the daughter of the mountain or Parvata), and reappears as Shiva's consort.

Ceremonial Killing

The Mahāsati (the great Sati) or the Sahagamana (joint departure) system of cremating the woman alive on the death of her husband is an ancient custom in India. Scholars of the Purāṇas trace the origins to the suicide of Satidevi in the Yajñakunda (sacrificial fireplace) of Lord Brahma, while a few attribute it to the pre-caste Vedic system of Indian society. In the Indian mythology of the Mahābhāratā, there is the instance of Madri dying on the funeral pyre of husband Pandu, leaving the children to the care of the first wife, Kunti. The feminists proclaim the Sati system as a cruel institution established by men against the womankind, while the lower caste in India have felt it as another means of torture taxed on them by the upper-caste Brahmins. Sati prevailed among certain sects of the society in ancient India, who either took the vow or deemed it a great honour to die on the funeral pyres of their husbands. Ibn Batuta (AD 1333) has observed that Sati was considered praiseworthy by the Hindus, without however being obligatory. The

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Agni Purāṇa declares that the woman who commits *sahagamana* goes to heaven. However, *Medhatithi* pronounced that Sati was like suicide and was against the Shastras, the Hindu code of conduct. It is believed that they were not coerced, although several wives committed Sati. The majority of the widows did not undergo Sati.

Throughout history, all the above-mentioned accounts of this act of death, supposedly voluntary, do not detail the reason behind its widespread popularity. The answer to the complex question of how Sati system originated may perhaps be any or all of the causes enumerated here:

- Burning the wife along with the attendants, horses and carriages of the dead dignitary was a common practice among some Central Asian tribes. India being the melting pot of good and bad social systems of its constituent cultures, the custom of Sati was absorbed.
- In a time which believed that a woman's path to heaven was through *Sheela* and *Pativritya*—her character, and devotion to her husband—it was perhaps thought that a woman's life served no purpose after the death of her husband.
- It might have come into practice as an evil family conspiracy against the widow to benefit from her assets and gold.
- The life of a widow was so bad (this has continued to this day in India), the women perhaps favoured death to humiliation.
- The women who went Sati were glorified to no avail. The enticement of instant fame and immortality cannot be ruled out as a reason why women committed Sati.
- There is another suicide tradition in the Jain religion called *Sallekhana*, where one dedicated one's soul in prayer. Despite this tradition, numerous instances in Indian history illustrate when a Jain woman has preferred Sati to *Sallekhana*—especially in the cases of untimely death of the husband.
- Some women believed that those who died with the love of their life, were united with the man in heaven in an eternal marriage. Numerous women believed that they have married the same man in several of their lives.

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- In Bengal, a system called *Däyabhaga* prevailed, entitling a woman equal property along with male members of the departed husband. This may be the reason for the Sati system being more popular in that region, wherein the woman was driven to commit Sati by force.
- There was a lot of tribal conflict in ancient India and so many warring men died in battle, leaving behind them, their defenceless young widows. One interesting suggestion I read, was that these women chose to commit suicide to save themselves from being raped by the invading enemy soldiers who killed their husbands.
- There are numerous occasions when the woman experiences a divine calling and decides to commit Sati.

By extension from the mythic Sati, the term is also used for the death, voluntary or involuntary, of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands in India. The term is also extended to refer to the widow herself. For this usage, the term is often written using the old English spelling of *suttee.* Though supposed to be voluntary, it is believed to have been often enforced by various social pressures, as well as the use of mind-altering chemicals, on the widow. Sati means a 'virtuous' woman. A woman who dies burning herself on her husband's funeral fire was considered most pious, and was believed to directly go to heaven, redeeming all the forefathers rotting in hell, by this "meritorious" act. The woman who committed Sati was worshipped as a Goddess, and temples were built in her memory.

Sati was banned in Bengal Presidency on 4 December 1829 by the East India Company. The last princely state to permit it was Jaipur, where it was abolished in 1846. Instances, however, continue to occur occasionally even to the present day. The government is forced to admit that, simple as it may be to enact laws, it is quite another matter to enforce them. Various measures against it now include efforts to stop the 'glorification' of the dead women. This deification often includes the erection of shrines to the dead, encouragement of pilgrimages to the site of the pyre, and an income to nearby villagers.

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The practise of Sati has been banned as early as on 4 December 1829 by the East India Company. The last princely state to permit it was Jaipur, where Sati was abolished in 1846. So, to all purposes, Sati has ceased to exist. But has it really? Then why do we have instances of later rulers and social reformers opposing this heinous crime?

Scriptural Evidences

Contrary to belief, the Vedas did sanction the practise of Sati. Evidences abound of verses exhorting the women to immolate their physical selves for the greater good.

The most sacred of Aryan scriptures are the Vedas, and the *Ṛgveda*, the oldest veda, explicitly sanctions the custom of sati. The following famous 'Sati Hymn' of the *Ṛgveda* was (and still is) recited during the actual immolation of the widow.

> Let these women, whose husbands are worthy and are living, enter th house with ghee (corrylium) (to their eyes). Let these wives first step into the pyre, tearless, without any affliction and well adorned.
>
> *Ṛgveda* X. 18.7

According to Vasishta's *Padma Purāṇa*, a woman must, on the death of her husband, allow herself to be burnt alive on the same funeral pyre. *Vishnusmrti* gives two choices for the widow:

> If a woman's husband dies, let her lead a life of chastity, or else mount his pyre.
>
> (*Vishnusmrti* xxv. 14)

Brahma is the creator of the world. One of the *Purāṇas* is named after him, the *Brahma Purāṇa*. Like other *Purāṇas*, it was composed after the Vedas (4000 BC–700 BC). This scripture also sanctions sati:

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'It is the highest duty of the woman to immolate herself after her husband'

(*Brahma Purāṇa* 80.75)

'(Sati) ... is enjoined by the Vedas'

(*Brahma Purāṇa* 80.75)

'(Sati) ... is greatly reputed in all the worlds'.

(*Brahma Purāṇa* 80.75)

'Long life is promised to the sati'

(*Brahma Purāṇa* 80.76, 80.77)

'She (the sati) lives with her husband in heaven for as many years as there are pores in the human body, i.e. 35 million years'

(*Brahma Purāṇa* 80.76, 80.77)

The *Garuda Purāṇa* favourably mentions the immolation of a widow on the funeral pyre, and states that women of all castes, even the Candalla woman, must perform Sati. The only exception allowed by this benevolent author is for pregnant women or those women who have young children. If women do not perform sati, then they will be reborn into the lowly body of a woman again and again till they perform Sati *Garuda Purāṇa*. II.4.91-100).

A sati who dies on the funeral pyre of her husband enjoys an eternal bliss in heaven

(*Daksa Smrti* IV. 18-19)

Yajnavalkya, the most important law-giver after Manu, states that 'sati is the only way for a chaste widow'.

The *Yogini Tantra* enjoins upon Brahmin widows to burn themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands (Yog. T. II.303-308). Vaisya and Sudra widows were also allowed to commit sati. It was prohibited to unchaste women and those having many children.

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The *Vyasa Smrti* gives one of the two alternatives for a Brahmin widow, i.e. either to become a sati or to take up asceticism after her tonsure.

(*Vyasa Smrti* II.53)

Tonsuring of the head was another evil that widows had to face. The widow was supposed to look like a *sanyasi*, so that no one would be attracted to her. The braid of hair, if continued by the widows, would supposedly result in the husband being put in bondage in the next world (*Skanda Pur.* Kashikhanda 4.74 f). If a widow does not become a sati, she should get her head tonsured (*Vedavyasa* II.53). Then again, women who did not commit sati were often sent to reservations where only widows live. One such place is Vrindavan.

In our ancient and most venerated epics, the *Mahābhāratā*, there are several instances where the women preferred to commit sati on the demise of their husbands and consorts.

Several of Krishna's wives performed sati upon his death, including Rukmini, Rohini, Devaki, Bhadra and Madura.

(*Mahābhāratā Mausalaparvan* 7.18)

Madri, the second wife of Pandu, considered an incarnation of the goddess Dhriti, performed sati

(*Mahābhāratā Adiparvan* 95.65)

Rohini, a wife of Vasudev, Krishna's father, who gave birth to Balrām (Devki's child), later became a sati.

The eight queens of Krishna, who have been named, with Rukmini at their head, embraced the body of Hari, and entered the funeral fire. Revati aslo embracing the corpse of Rama, entered the blazing pile, which was cool to her, happy in contact with her lord. Hearing these events, Ugrasena and Anakadundubhi, with Devaki and Rohini, committed themselves to the flames.

(*Vishnu Purāṇa* 5.38)

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Ancient Travellers' Accounts

Even ancient observers mentioned the practice of sati. Alexander the Great and the Greeks observed Sati in Punjab (Onescrites in Strabo xv.i.ch 30). The Greek Diodorus Siculus, who lived in the 1st century BC, mentioned the practice of sati in his account of the Punjab in the 4th century BC. Indigenous historical evidence substantiates this.

The earliest recorded historical instance of sati is that of the wife of the Hindu general Keteus, who died in 316 BC while fighting against Antigonos. Both his wives were eager to perform sati, but as the elder one was with child, only the younger one alone was allowed to carry out her wish.

The sati was customary for the widows of Kshatriyas in the end of the first century BC (Strabo XV.ch.700.30). Sati was performed by all the Aryan races, for it is recorded that the Germanic tribes used to immolate the widows of chieftain to accompany the husband to Valhalla. The Arab writer Alberuni mentioned the practice of sati among the Hindus.

> She (the widow) has only to choose between two things—either to remain a widow as long as she lives, or to burn herself, and the latter eventuality is considered preferable... As regards the wives of kings, they are in the habit of burning them whether they wish it or not.
>
> (Al Beruni II.LXIX)

> Nicolo deo Contei states that as many as 3000 of the wives and concubines of the kings of Vijayanagar were pledged to be burnt with their lord on his death (and often ministers and palace servants accompanied the king in death).
>
> A L Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*

Strangely, the practice increased in popularity in Bengal during the British expansion, despite the best efforts of Ram Mohan Roy to stop it. This is also confirmed by the traveller Abbe DuBois:

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> (Sati) is more in vogue on the banks of the Ganges, (while) in Bengal Presidency (only) 706 suttees occurred in 1817 (and in) the Madras Presidency (out of) 30 million inhabitants not 30 allow themselves to be burnt each year.
>
> (Abbe DuBois 357)

There exists a vivid description by the French traveller Jean-Baptistge Tavernier, who visited India six times between 1641 and 1667. A jeweller by profession, he came to India as a result of his involvement with the gem trade. Because he was not a Christian missionary, what he wrote is the result of his own experiences and cannot be dismissed as having an inherent religious bias. In fact, his writings display a marked admiration for India. However, like all observers he was struck by the intense exploitation of non-Brahmin races by Brahmins. This unprejudiced traveller clearly describes Brahmin mass murder of non-Brahmin widows and their confiscation of their wealth.

> The Brahmans accompanying her (the Sati) exhort her to show resolution and courage, and many Europeans believe that in order to remove the fear of that death which man naturally abhors, she is given some kind of drink that takes away her senses and removes all apprehensions which the preparations for her death might occasion. It is for the interest of the Brahmans that these unhappy women maintain the resolution they have taken to burn themselves, for all the bracelets which they wear, both in arms and legs, with their earrings and rings, belong of right to the Brahmans, who search for them in the ashes after the women are burnt. According to the station and wealth of the woman, the bracelets, earrings, and rings are either of gold or silver; the poorest wear them of copper and tin; but as for precious stones, they do not wear them at all when going to be burnt.
>
> (Tavernier, *J.B.*, *Travels in India*, Vol. II, pp. 164–65)

Tavernier's heart-rending descriptions of the manner in which the Brahmins tied the shrieking woman to posts and then burnt

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her alive are followed by narratives of greedy Brahmins looting the properties of the women they had killed:

> I have seen women burnt in three different ways, according to the customs of different countries. In the kingdom of Gujarat; and as far as Agra and Delhi, this is how it takes place: On the margin of a river or tank, a kind of small hut, about 12 feet square, is built of reeds and all kinds of faggots, with which some pots of oil and other drugs are placed in order to make it burn quickly. The woman is seated in a half-reclining position in the middle of the hut, her head reposes on a kind of pillow of wood, and she rests her back against a post, to which she is tied by her waist by one of the Brahmans, for fear lest she should escape on feeling the flame. In his position she holds the dead body of her husband on her knees, chewing betel all the time; and after having been about half an hour in this condition, the Brahman who has been by her side in the hut goes outside, and she calls out to the priests to apply the fire; this the Brahmans, and the relatives and friends of the woman who are present immediately do, throwing into the fire some pots of oil, so that the woman may suffer less by being quickly consumed. After the bodies have been reduced to ashes, the Brahmans take whatever may be found in the way of melted fold, silver, tin, or copper, derived from the bracelets, earrings, and rings which (p. 166) the woman had on; this belongs to them by right, as I have said.
>
> (Tavernier, J.B., *Travels in India*, Vol. II, pp. 165–66)

Tavernier was witness to many more gruesome scenes of enforcing sati on hapless women. One such instance is:

> In the greater part of the Coromandel coast the woman does not burn herself with the body of her deceased husband, but allows herself to be interred, while alive, with him in a hole which the Brahmans dig in the ground, about 1 foot deeper than the height of the man or woman. They generally select a sandy spot, and when they have placed the man and woman in the hole, each of their

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friends fills a basket of sand, and throws it on the bodies until the hole is full and heaped over, half a foot higher than the ground, after which they jump and dance upon it till they are certain that the woman is smothered.

(Tavernier, J.B., *Travels in India*, Vol. II, p. 168)

Recent Incidents

The discussion on the prevalence of sati would be incomplete without analysing the impact of sati worship at the post-independence Rani Sati temple at Jhunjhunu, clearly the mother of all sati temples. Earlier, the Deorala incident was seen in isolation from the happening at the Jhunjhunu or any of the other sati temples. However, there is a link between the two—one was a case of practice of sati and the other the glorification of it.

That the revival of the practice of sati in Rajasthan is linked to the success of the Rani Sati temple in Jhunjunu is clearly established by statistics. Today there are over 100 sati temples in Rajasthan. In the last 40 years, there has been an alarming increase in sati incidents in the state; an average of one a year. Not less than 28 widow immolations have taken place within a radius of 200 miles of the Jhunjunu sati temple since Independence.

Conclusion

What good is history if we do not learn from it? The past leaves behind the words and experiences that enrich our lives, making us learn from our mistakes and improve upon the successes. This inhuman custom of setting fire to a human did leave its mark on the human psyche—both in its physical manifestation in the small hand imprints left by the women as they terminated their mortal journey as also in the hearts and minds of the multitudes whose existence was irrevocably changed by such an event.

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What cannot be ignored is along with instances such as infant mortality, honour killings, atrocities committed on the basis of caste, sati was yet another weapon designed to subjugate woman. The immense success testifies to the fact that society looked for a way to gain materially at another's downfall, and latched on to it.

To revert to our original bone of contention, is the practice of business of burning of widows—the common meaning of sati—obsolete? Facts prove otherwise. As long as the crime is propagated and perpetuated, and as long as woman dying on the funeral pyre of her husband is venerated and eulogised, the sati will go on. We will continue to read such statistics in our newspapers, feel shocked at such atrocities and slowly get used to it. Unless the abhorrence comes from within us all, sati temples at Deorala, Jhunjhunu and countless other villages will spawn many more edifices commemorating crimes against women.

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Sandhān, Vol. IV, No. 2, July–December 2004

REVIEW ARTICLE

A. Kanthamani

Can Either the Vedanta-Phile or the Sankhya-Phile Bell Schrodinger's Cat?*

I

Will the mental states *plus* quantum states of the brain provide the best bet for a candidate theory of mind? If so then, the Vedanta/ Sankhya theory of mind is likely to give hopes for a better theory than all the western theories put together. While the Vedantic model of mind with its five sheaths (annamaya, prananmaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya, and anandamaya) represents a continuous emergent character of mind (a sort of epiphenomentalism), it ultimately stands for monism or *non-dualism*. Incidentally, we can compare Dan Dennett's Physical Stance, Design Stance, and Intentional Stance to the first three while making way for the fourth namely the Epistemic Stance as common for all the three. Whereas the Sankhya theory of evolution is claimed to be the 'most plausible theory of evolution' to date, it stems from a form of *dualism*. In fact we can question whether it is a form of dualism. Unless we have an independent criterion for its elements, we cannot grant without severe constraints. Even if we agree to fuse it with evolution so as to maintain that Purusha is an evolute of Prakriti, the subsidiary questions about Buddhi, Manas, and Ahankara as inclusive of evolutionary theory strike as odd. Setting aside all these initial doubts, in the final run, it would not seem worthwhile to combine both *dualism* and *non-dualism* that are

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supposed to yield a sort of panpsychism as revealed in terms of 'equivalences', 'correlations', 'correspondences', or the 'mirroring of microcosm and the macrocosm'. Such is the not-altogether-safe defence of Subash Kak's candidate theory that he attributes to the Indian tradition in his recent book on the *Architecture of Knowledge* (2003) with all that he could muster from quantum theory, neuro-computational theory, and evolution.

We can read such an account of panpsychism from two angles. One is from the state of the art in cognitive science; and second is from the particular support it receives from panpsychism as it is ordinarily understood. The state of the art in cognitive and consciousness studies attests to the fact that adding the quantum basis of mind and reality yields only an overdetermination argument since whatever has already been said about it can more or less be synchronized with what these theorists claim. There is a general and particular reason for overdetermination. The general reason is that neither quantum physics nor quantum computer adds anything that has not already been said by the argument which says without them. The particular reason is that while non-linearity becomes the explanandum of quantum states of the mind, what is called quantum computer or quantum logic is central to entropy-related indeterminacy. While the former arises at the level of individual human intelligence, the latter arises on account of intersubjectivity. It is not presumptuous to think that unless we know how to relate the above two properties, we cannot know how they can support an understanding of the mind. We can broach the question from yet another angle. The former must account for rule following and rule violation (Kripkean) cases and thus should be accounted for one brand of anti-realism, and the latter stands for another brand of anti-realism which claims that there is no fact of the matter for certain superimposed states (Dummettian). The upshot is not an overshoot because the neurocomputational perspective *à la* Paul Churchland not only centralizes non-linearity explaining it in terms of feedback or recurrent cognitive (back propagation of error) modelling which excludes any consideration of quantum view of mind.

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Unfortunately Kak is unable to realize that Churchland's ascending and descending pathways in intralaminer nucleus in the thalamus is neither avowedly functional nor explicitly computational or even so straightforwardly an account of artificial intelligence, but an alley of research on neural architecture (see p. 237 for silican retina; not once is Churchland mentioned in his book). His efforts to weave an 'interface' between them stops short of a distorted account of the former (e.g. laterilization of the brain). In view of the above, there are absolutely no grounds for saying that neuro-computational connectionist paradigm is providing only a mechanist or reductionist model of mind.

Thus what the addition of quantum account yields is the symptomatic of the relation between the individual and social account of reality and the same may equally be otherwise explained in terms of other ways of understanding without it. Such a hypothesis may not altogether be false. *A fortiori*, there cannot be any claim saying that quantum physics or quantum computer will give a 'deep' theory of mind just because of the 'holistic' character of quantum physics as claimed by Kak in his book. Kak seriously believes that quantum physics can take us beyond the mechanistic view of the universe. If we invest the necessary '*telos*' (purpose) we get architecture of inner knowledge. Kak marshals all kinds of technical expertise which has already been in print in more than 250 articles and a few titles to prove his point.

Now let us turn to the support for panpsychism. The above remark, however cute it might appear, may strike one as an affront to Kak's central claim in his book. But this is what comes to be nearly true. This is because quantum logic remains only at the speculative level at present. If it were granted that what Kak claims is of any consequence, then thinkers who use quantum theory or quantum logic, with the exception of David Chalmers, such as Roger Penrose, Jonathan Shear, and William Seager must take lessons from India on a Super Union Theory of brain and mind, in which the equivalence of Microcosm–Macrocosm *Bandhu* (Identity?) will deliver the identity of neurocomputational model of the brain with the quantum theory of consciousness. Unlike the

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above thinkers, Kak's critique of non-reductionism, that denies the causal closure of the physical world, leads him neither towards a Vedantic monism (non-dualism?) nor towards a dualism of the Sankhya type. While the Catuskoti Negation (*neti, neti* means not this, not this) or the corresponding complementary reading of quantum theory supports the former, the latter is supported by his speaking of the correlation and mirroring of consciousness and reality which may require yet another reading of quantum theory. What is the rationale for clubbing Vedantic and Sankhya premises together is not clear from his account.

In effect, Kak wants to draw an indigenous conclusion of panpsychism (the term hardly occurs in his narrative except in terms of other symptoms) which is somewhat quite unrelated to the above by making use of a vague identity between neuro-cognitive theory of memory and quantum theory of identity. He complicates his account further by assuming that our *Citta*-memories, just as consciousness, are fundamental. *Citta* according to him is a universal memory field. Does it mean that *Citta*-memories must be regarded as the most fundamental principle? Research on network theory of memory can hardly support this. As his references reveal he depends on some sort of distinctions between different types of memory and uses the two related notions of proactive interference and retroactive interference, to explain the gain or loss of information. Further he also develops it in the direction of explaining synesthesia to explain further what he calls, *pace* Napier, the distinction between Self and Non-self. The challenge here lies in the question whether he can sponsor an explanatory paradigm for accounting for psychological deviance of mental patients or to develop a sort of Indian variant of psychiatry. He remarks that Parkinson patients have two selves. Similarly he likens *Aphasia* with *Abasha* just as he likens *agnosia* to *ajnana*. All these things get the right type of explanation from the neuro-computational perspective. Then, why the fuss? It is not clear whether the idea of cross-wiring of neurons or synesthesia is the same as the one that has been used by Ramachandran for a different purpose with a different effect. How different is this

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from Churchland's way of making mind as a recurrent machine is not so much clear. Perhaps both serve as *explanans* for non-linearity. Both Ramachandran and Churchland are cognitive scientists. Kak adduces no empirical evidence. He fails to explain non-linearity throughout and that accounts for the major failure of his book. I think that his central claim thus becomes vulnerable to the extent that it needs philosophical support. It is high time such Indian scientists understand that science–philosophy continuum in the West is radically different from science–philosophy insularity of the East and so they should leave philosophy and talk more science. Kak, instead of sifting evidence through various interpretations of quantum theory, only assembles remainders.

The upshot is not meant to laugh at such insights into the 'monistic' logic in Vedas and Upanishads two millennia before Christ as illustrated in the aphorism '*yat pinde tad brahmande*' (quoted on p. 276). Unless they remain empirically supported, we are whistling in the dark. We must let students to approach our traditions with an open mind. The research tradition (in Larry Lauden's sense) in cognitive science is not completed by the addition of quantum theory as claimed by the author who wears his philosophical naivéte on the sleeve. We might have had mathematics during the ancient period, but not a philosophy of mathematics so as to introduce an order into the 'architecture of knowledge' by taking this as the apex layer. The author has been misled by the Foucaultian-ring of the above phrase. His efforts to lionize the overarching structure of Vedic Science so as to complete the above research tradition will not see fruition.

Just imagine the fallout. Consciousness will become the most fundamental principle like Brahman. Brahman will become a part of the universe with the religious aura. Consciousness influences matter and vice versa. We are creators of the Universe. We have freewill. Freewill arises on account of indeterminacy of quantum mechanics. We have a sixth sense (proprioception) over and above five senses (this will only show that our understanding of the body is related to the understanding of the mind; nothing more). Reality is not being, but becoming. The split-brain

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experiment supports (self–non-self) or overself. There is life in the interstellar universe. None of the above follows from a panpsychistic premise. Panpsychism cannot lend empirical support to anyone of the above. It is not that they are saying whose veracity is doubtful, but no philosopher worth the salt seriously believes in it. Using quantum premises, one cannot draw religious/mystical conclusions. By speculating on Indian Cognitive Philosophy as coming of age, only supported by Indian Cosmology which asserts the identity between terrestrial clock and biological clock on the basis of asserting that biological systems have connections with astronomical phenomena (23), Indian mathematics which decks the ideational layer of knowledge, and Indian Evolution which facilitates an impromptu distinction between self and non-self, one cannot make much headway. What he calls non-self depends on the notion of immune self which in turns depends on some biological researches of Silverstein (1989). Fastened together, they all provide an overarching structure of knowledge. This is at least what Kak claims in his book.

On the whole, Kak's explorations into the *Architecture of Knowledge* thus has a lookalike with what an Indian philosopher could do containing an orchestrated defence of Hindutva Ideas but it is much more than that. It aims nothing less than the 'astonishing synthesis' of two perspectives of the East and the West. It is both challenging and stimulating. Thanks to the *Centre for Studies in Civilizations* for publishing it as the Project No.13 under the Illustrious Editorship of Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya, the doyen among Indian Philosophers. Nevertheless, it is a hodgepodge, an assembly of cognitive ideas without a sustainable coherent defence of Indian cognitive science, so to say. There is a placebo: the search is still on. This is exactly what an attentive reader gets. We are led to several fronts, but no unification is evident. May be because his basic training is in technology wherein he has produced few articles on quantum computers. His perspective stands or falls on one key premise. That is, just as quantum reality responds to our probe, the informational structure responds to our probe (f.n.1, Chapter 4). What one has

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to make of this? There is a direct interface between the quantum basis of the world and the quantum basis of the mind. Can the above hypothesis be supported by what Kak calls as a direct interface between the information flow in the brain and the information flow in quantum physics so as to yield something like the above? Such remarks remain very vague at present and hence they are based on unsound analogy.

The key Chapter (4) titled 'The Quantum Basis of Reality' begins with the above analogy, and after making a passing mention of consciousness in microtubules that is not widely acceptable, it proceeds to assemble the remarks on the two-slit experiment, Schrodinger's Cat which is only a thought experiment, Bell's Inequality, the Copenhagen interpretation, delayed choice, the measurement problem which brings together consciousness–reality ensemble, before favouring the notion of becoming over that of being, all worked out on the backdrop of an inadequate understanding of logical positivism. Take the famous Schrodinger's Cat. The lesson that it teaches is that reality reaches consciousness in Neumann's chains or the two-slit experiment which only conveys the superpositions and all of these only support some sort of non-linearity. But non-linearity in what sense? One way of understanding this is to see that the sum of causes in the cause–effect schema ($C_1 - E_1$) and ($C_2 - E_2$) is not equivalent to their effect schema (I am indebted to Scott 1996 for this particular formulation which holds that $(C_1 + C_2) \rightarrow (E_{1,2} \neq E_1 + E_2)$. As I construe the picture, this does not imply anything non-causal, but only that when causes are put together the overall effect might be more than the sum. By parity one may argue that $\psi = \psi_1 + \psi_2$ may be non-causal. But Chalmers prefers to take it as causal. Shear substitutes semantic information as causal. But Kak appears to take side with Bohr with the notion of quantum field which is also used by many others. But the theory remains incomplete. Seen in the background of other discussions, it is a piecing together of disparate interpretations.

Even if we borrow the terms superpositions, wave collapse, and eigenstates from quantum physics, it remains still unclear whether the Vedantic three-tier universe fits the bill. The main reason for

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this is while from superpositions we reach eigenstates through wave collapse, the descending path is not comparable to both the ascending and descending path of Vedanta. No ascent to the supreme level is to be distinguished except in an epistemic way. Many Vedantins err here by hazarding a guess. The check on the religious conclusions is very much obvious. If causal or functional feature is excluded by fiat, then the only option that remains is non-linearity or entropy-related feature. This is the crux. Kak is ready to interpret *Maya* as an eigenstate that is brought about by wave collapse so as to make it appear as phenomenal. It is not therefore illusion. The ascending path to self-realization will be cut then. Whenceforth can such non-linearity be Vedantized?

On the other hand, it might converge with what positivists would have said on the intersubjectivity of science. One should only consult Morris Schlick's response to the quantum physics to understand the spirit of positivism. Excluding it in favour of realism smacks only of philosophical naivete. Like a true Yankee Patron of Hindutva, he feels at home more in quantum physics and quantum computers. The vulnerability of his ideas already received a well-meant critique from Meera Nanda who pooh-poohs the so-called 'quantitative' Vedic Science. I am not in full support of the stance taken by Meera Nanda. More recently Professor Yash Pal has dismissed Vastu as worth the dustbin. Let me try independent support to my own impressions.

Take Indian cosmology. One does not want to dismiss the strange coincidences between the terrestrial and celestial time. Biological systems have connections with astronomical phenomena (23) as sometimes exemplified in circadian rhythms or *turiya* (deep sleep) encounters with pure consciousness. Biological evidences as well as medical evidences never support these phenomena. The two thousand year old argument needs replenishment in the light of research on delta sleep (A. Kanthamani's 'Are we all Olympian Turiyanites?' to appear). If delta sleep can encounter pure consciousness, uniting Atman with Brahman, does it turn our classrooms (where our pupils sleep) into cabinets where we encounter only consciousness in pure form. Churchland avers that

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consciousness disappears in deep sleep only to reappear in dreaming (5 and 6 on p. 214). We have no idea what happens when it disappears. One cannot also take them in their stride. How to unify them? One hardly knows whether it sets the proper stage for debate. Similarly, mathematics. At what point will it be possible for a student of philosophy of mathematics to integrate the off-hand remark that it provides an apex of knowledge with his understanding of mathematics. A similar argument is in order for Indian theory of evolution that can be integrated into the psychology of Yoga. If the three gunas of *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas á la* Sankhya are to be taken respectively as 'information flow', metabolic activity, and inertia of membranes or even alpha, beta, and gamma equivalences, then the best bet would be to take them as such in lieu of the former. The architecture of knowledge grows into a viable entity more by the latter than by the former that is merely an occasion for narcissism. What essentials are available to unify these ideas into the general corpus of Western Science? No answer is forthcoming.

Take the recent psycho-neuroimmunology, the study of interactions between mental states and the immune system (176ff.). Kak claims that the parallel between cognitive states and immune states reveals many things. The bi-directional communication between them has no laws. One is that the mind–body symphony vindicates the *dosa* theory of Ayurveda. Similarly if the feats of Gopi Krishna and Swami Rama are genetic, then they have a genetic predisposition. True, the neuro-computational view of the brain makes a natural play with quantum view of the world and thenceforward to quantum computers. So Kak uses the former as a lever to push through his ideas on the latter. One expects that he should reply to Churchland who revels in his scepticism about quantum physics calling it as 'redundant' (e.g. Paul Churchland's comments on Roger Penrose). His reasons are obvious. First, it does not add anything remarkably new to the existing stock as far as the nature of mind is concerned. Second, it is not to be preferred over and above that of others. Neither Artificial Intelligence, nor Turing computability provide the grist

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for the correct picture of mind. So a key issue here is whether a suitable dose of Vedanta and Sankhya will perform the necessary hat trick for a further conclusion about pan-proto-psychism that comes closer to Vedanta. David Chalmers is one who is not willing to subscribe to this type of manoeuvring and he is critical of Jonathan Shear who is on this side of the fence. Kak misses them all.

By fusing such Vedantic or Sankhya premises with quantum interpretation, Kak wants to argue for a sort of panpsychism that is just equal to quantum completeness or coherence. Kak's account of two-slit experiment is not synchronized with Penrose's reading of the same, even though he is inclined to draw our attention to the latter on other grounds. Consciousness is generated in the Cytoskeletal Neurons. A very similar fate hangs on his treatment of quantum computers and no effort is evident to take the discussion in the way as for example Lockwood does. Kak never mentions Lockwood. Similarly, one misses any reference to the famous Vilayanur Ramachandran's popular work on phantom limbs. Kak recognizes the problem in a perfunctory way but never mentions Ramachandran. He is at present associated with the *Centre for Brain and Cognition* (La Jolla, California, USA). Does he think we add up altogether into some sort of coherence in which we are expected to give due credit to Vedanta or Sankhya traditions?

II

A direct answer therefore to the title question is that if we add quantum procedures (quantum system or quantum computer) we can claim that Indians have said the last word on the nature of mind or consciousness. The circumscribed evidence that comes from every direction of cognitive science adds indirect support to such a plea. Accordingly, it is proposed that either a radicalized variant of panpsychism or a more radicalized variant of psycho-dynamism must win the day. If so then the Indian contributions towards the understanding of mind or consciousness have

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anticipated the birth of quantum computers even at the time of Vedas. That is, by premising on either the Vedantic premise or on the Sankhya premise, one can arrive at a conclusion which is directly supported by mathematical philosophers like Roger Penrose, or quantum philosophers like Michael Lockwood, or even so, by cognitive philosophers like David Chalmers (Natural Dualism) and Jonathan Shear who avow open allegiance to the ancient Indian and Buddhist traditions. In what follows, I shall dispel such an impression by scrupulously joining the above premises and their general arguments so as to verify whether such a conclusion is warranted. My impression here is that no such conclusion could be derived from panpsychism or psychodynamism, as both stand in direct support to the embodied view of cognition, either independently or jointly. I hope to convince many an Indian not that their endeavours will ever be likely to bear fruit, but they must exercise great caution in purging the religious aura that surrounds their myriad theorizations, and come forward to test them in the light of recent science in exactly the way the thinkers in the West do.

Dualism should be understood as standing or falling on the independence criterion. Tim Crane in 'Mental Substances' (2002) contends that if this were so, then the substance is nothing other than the person which is deigned as Person by Strawson and others. What the above point implies is that even dualism works only when the realm of extension and the realm of thoughts are ontologically independent of each other. We can remember how Churchland remarks against Popper's lack of interaction between World 1 and World 3. This means that the former is in space and time while the latter is not. But thoughts or language are not non-material because thoughts belong to the person. If they were not, they are as independent as language is. But language is the via media of getting access to other minds. Dualism of properties has to stand on the argument from analogy. Dualism of substance depends on interactionism which he accepts. It appears that Cartesian dualism is more about properties in which case it is not dualism with any independent criterion. What about Sankhya

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dualism which takes consciousness as nature? Sankhya will toe the line of person approach in which the properties are not independent but synergic. This is exactly the Purusha–Prakriti Synergie.

By parity, one may also hold that natural dualism is *mind-body-conscious experience.* That is, consciousness is conscious experience. Natural dualism works like psychophysical parallelism correlating physical and phenomenological experience. There is a passage from the above to the view about the continuum of mind and body that lies at the core of embedded cognition. There is no boundary line between mind, body, and the world, as Andy Clark (1997) eloquently puts it.

Vedantins subscribe to non-dualism. If dualism does not work in the expected way, non-dualism might for the simple reason that it directly entails monism. So monism looks like a better doctrine, but if so then some form of double aspect theory must be true. Thus we can gradually build up an impression that some form that combines double aspect, psycho-physical parallelism together with some format of quantum theory might be the appropriate model for the mind. So, property dualism when it is combined with psychophysical parallelism might sponsor a quantum theory of mind which perfectly fits the agenda. The same point can be better argued by considering that some form of psychophysical parallelism is thought to be a clear 'pointer' in the direction of panpsychism. Conversely, some form of double aspect theory which holds that conscious experience is the most fundamental principle of the physical world together with proper input from quantum computing will go a long way towards supporting psychophysical identity. Thus the possibility of mutual endorsement is revealing. This is exactly where we meet the panpsychism which forms the subject matter of debate that is currently under way and also popular in a sense. William Seager sees the prospects by making an addendum of the 'psychic' and the 'pan' part locating them in the writings of Chalmers, Penrose, and Lockwood.

According to Seager, there are at least five problems that confront a cognitive scientist while describing what is called the

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generation problem. The generation problem requires us to explain how mind or consciousness is generated out of the features of the brain. The five problems are: the combination problem, the unconscious mind, the completeness problem, the no-sign problem, and the non-mental problem. Adding the quantum theory would have thrown light on all of these problems. Given the inherent paradoxes of quantum phenomena, the best bargain is only a speculative theory. The best way to see the generation problem is to see how quantum parts combine into quantum wholes. The answer is that the quantum wholes are more than the quantum parts. Let us call this as the *non-linearity premise.* Now add the psychic part which holds that psyche of all units form a whole. The corresponding Vedantic premise would be Atman is Brahman because all Atmans form the Brahman. Expressed in the above way, this should be read as Brahman is much more than unity of Atmans. Expressed otherwise: the forged identity would be read as a statement that asserts that all Atman-States are Brahman-States and not vice versa. This pre-empts the consideration that there is no point at which you can draw a fence around Atman. Atmanhood spills over into Brahmanhood, so to say at a certain point of realization. To this now we can add the Sankhya premise which holds that consciousness is the most fundamental Principle of the Universe. Kak goes further in making Citta-states as an equally more fundamental panpsychistic premise from which he aims to deduce that there is life beyond Earth. If we agree that consciousness arises out of matter as an evolute, then we get some sort of conclusion which only states that matter and mind lies in a continuum. It can easily be shown that in lieu of going from a panpsychistic preamble, one can start from consciousness and relate the existence of the world or reality, by means of an ensemble which is what is endorsed by embedded or embodied cognitive science. This is what perhaps attested to by Consciousness, is Existence, a point that comes closer to Sat-Cit-*sans*-Ananda (Cf. Ted Honderich 2002). Honderich stipulates the differential phenomenologies of perceptual, reflective and affective consciousness *as* Existence. Looking at from the point of view of

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embodied cognitive science, the whole efforts to butt in quantum considerations do not add anything more than that is attested to by the former. There is no reason to believe that it is in tune with his theory of evolution and fulfils the pan part of panpsychism.

Let us recall the non-linearity premise (as represented by the Combination Problem) that requires causal interaction; now, add the psychic part given by Vedantin (Kak expresses only a negative support to this); the pan part is to be elicited from the Sankhya premise on evolution which is to be understood as more the causal interaction. All these above three premises cannot be said to yield the aforesaid conclusion. Consequently it cannot be claimed that this *ersatz* panpsychism can solve the problem of combination by means of quantum coherence or quantum completeness except under special circumstances. For example, Chalmers may not agree to (2) and (3) and he may not agree with the equivalence of panpsychism with quantum coherence. For others (Shear, Seager) who accept quantum theory, the equivalence might work but in different but more functional or causal ways. Since this is not the type of panpsychism that Kak favours, its theoretical status becomes vulnerable. On the other hand, if he wants to support it with this, then it will never support the Indian stand, stated in (2) and (3).

III

Let me now state the objective of the paper. My aim is to demonstrate that the above argument even though tightly knit is tendentious. First is redundancy: it states that mind/brain, as a quantum system, is non-linear in lieu of stating that mind/brain is non-linear. One is tantamount to the other in whatever way non-linearity is to be read. A strong suggestion is to read it in terms of the notion of causal relation: causal sum is more than its causal parts (*supra* the quoted formulation of Scott). The point that goes against is that this is part of classical mechanics and not a part of relativity theory. This raises the question whether the above criticism

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of redundancy is justifiable. Churchland justifies it by saying that the recourse to quantum states of the mind to explain non-linearity is redundant since such an *explanans* does not add anything more than what is already explainable in terms of other devices. The other device is the context-sensitive recurrent network that enables the network to be free from error with a percentage. This is what that seems to have some bearings on the above reading in terms of quantum mechanics.

Secondly, Seager's point is to add merely a negative support to the above argument. He explains it by saying that there is no argument from general principles against saying that the quantum wholes are not just the sum of the parts. That is there is no argument from general principles against saying that panpsychical combination of eternal mental units from distinctive mental wholes. So long as there is no positive evidence, the matter may be allowed to stand there. This takes care of the psychic part of the above argument.

From whatever is being said in favour of the pan part, it may be surmised that it remains only at the speculative level. Chalmers is much more explicit and he is not favouring the preponderance of quantum interpretation over that of equally plausible other interpretations. In fact, he is very cautious in issuing a warning not to carry the non-linearity aspect too far. If this is so, we can surmise that he is not generally in favour of the two premises. More particularly, he may not favour that the causal sum is more than its parts and hence the above equivocation between panpsychism and quantum coherence. He may not endorse the above argument which derives panpsychism from *non-linearity hypothesis.* Chalmers goes the whole hog with psycho-physical parallelism which to his understanding is susceptible of mixing with panpsychism. Granting that this is a variant of panpscychism, it is nowhere evident that this will support Kak's Vedic Panpsychism.

On the other hand, Penrose uses the two-slit experiment to demonstrate that mental states as quantum states are non-computable. This he does only as part of his attack on the generation problem. It does not have much to say on the so-called

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combination problem with which Chalmers is concerned. The view which holds that consciousness is generated in microtubules at a certain stage merely stipulates that they are epiphenomenal. Epiphenomenalism cannot serve as an *explanans* for non-linearity. Given the above redundancy, non-linearity is either explained in ways other than quantum states or one must seek an understanding of non-linearity itself. Penrose overshoots and Chalmers does not.

Another effort is to explain the phenomenon of combination in terms of quantum or thermodynamic computing. From a suggestion made by Bennett, now it has been demonstrated that there is a case of telereporting between two atoms using a third atom. This is understood to explain action at a distance. This is used to explain the possibility of quantum computers of the future. To what extent this will give rise to a conclusion which should be mixed up with religious dogmas is anybody's guess. No conclusion needs to be drawn in this direction as attested to by all writers. Thus we are constrained to return to the cycle of two types of anti-realism mentioned at the beginning. Lockwood is one of those who speak favourably of the possibility of quantum theory and quantum computer. After reviewing many such interpretations that include Deutsch, who suggests Bose-condensed states for superposition and others like Frohlich, he points at the possibility that consciousness can be grounded in Bose-condensation which is exactly what we need for quantum computers. He comments that such condensations lend themselves to coherent superpositions with constructive and destructive interference that is required of quantum computer memory states. But then it is 'highly speculative' at the moment. I think, Kak confuses between quantum logic and quantum computer. Quantum and intuitionist logics are 'deviant' and they serve only a 'heuristic' purpose. As such no one has constructed quantum computer.

However, Seager suggests a new mathematical trick in his proof of panpsychism introducing what is called quantum erasers. But this will not support quantum coherence. Because they deamplify quantum effects: they deamplify quantum effects and

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so they will not support complex, unified states of consciousness (283). It appears that nowhere the intransitive unified consciousness is supported. All that it supports is the states or a transitive state of consciousness. Lockwood compares Turing Machines with Universal Turing Machines. He comments they oppose each other and hence it may be surmised that non-linearity is independent of Turing Machines. That makes him wonder whether quantum interpretation will have any bearings on Dummettian type of antirealism. Does it mean that quantum logic is just an alley of intuitionist logic? I have extended this imagery to Kripke also in the initial paragraphs. In the final run, Seager supports Searle's standpoint as illustrated in his *Chinese room argument* but with a different purpose. On the whole, Seager thinks that the whole defence can be undertaken only as a diffidence (283). Accordingly, what all these reflections give is a 'faintly sickening odour of something put together in the metaphysical laboratory' (283-4). Hence his proof for panpsychism needs a closer examination. The telereporting may not find much favour as there is no way to transmit information except through ordinary means. All this agrees with Chalmers.

In view of the above, I think, the Vedanta-phile or the Sankhya-phile should desist from the idea of attempting to bell Schrodinger's Cat.

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BOOK REVIEWS

R. Balasubramanian (ed), *Theistic Vedānta* (Volume II, Part 3 of the *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, General Editor: D.P. Chattopadhyaya), PHISPC, Centre for Studies in Civilizations, New Delhi, 2003, pp. lix+929, Rs. 1950.

If anyone is looking for a single, authentic source of detailed information on the Indian schools of Theistic Vedānta together with some topics closely related to them, this volume is definitely the one and the only one such source he/she may look into with great profit. If people had been expecting such a volume, they should now feel happy that it has arrived and if people had no idea at all that such a volume was in the offing, they should feel even more surprised and happy. The first section of the volume titled "Journey through the Heritage" contains two compact surveys of classical Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism done in about seventy-five pages. It prepares the ground for understanding the detailed chapters that follow in the next section. The second section, which is the largest, titled "Expressions of the Heritage" contains extended expositions of Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita; single chapter expositions of the Vedāntic systems of Vallabha, Caitanya, Swāminārāyaṇa, the system of Kashmir Śaiva Advaitism and Vīra-Śaivism; and the section ends with an extended exposition of Śaiva Siddhānta. While the extended exposition of Viśiṣṭādvaita is done in about half a dozen chapters (of a total of about 200 pages) out of a total of twenty-five chapters of the volume (of about 900 pages), Dvaita is expounded

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in five chapters (of about 150 pages) and Śaiva Siddhānta in three chapters (of about 100 pages). There is a third section in the volume called "Vindication of the Heritage" which contains three chapters: The Philosophy and Mysticism of Tamil Siddhas, The Bhakti movement in South India, and The Bhakti movement in North India.

There is a good balance in the treatment of the religious/theological aspects and the epistemological/metaphysical aspects of different schools on an almost equal footing and also nearly uniformly throughout the volume. Considering the multi-author character of such volumes that are accompanied by their own built-in limitations which are not always easy to avoid, this balance between the theological and philosophical content is a surprisingly welcome feature, and it definitely constitutes one of the unquestionable merits of the volume as a whole. Also, since all schools of Vedānta have a practical orientation, there is consequently a mandatory section in each school discussing the practical teachings of that school. All the chapters are well researched, well documented and some of them quite heavily so. Useful bibliographies are also included at the end of each chapter for facilitating further study by those whose appetite is whetted by their reading.

Almost all the authors conform to the by-now-standardised pattern of exposition of the tenets of each school—a pattern which is normally seen in all Vedāntic publications originating from Indian authors. This pattern consists in explaining the chief as well as peculiar tenets of that school together with reasons justifying their adoption and also the reasons for their not adopting other possible, but deviant, tenets found in other schools. This is an age-old, time-tested pattern adopted by most of the original works of the Vedāntic schools themselves, famously known as the *pūrvapakṣa-siddhānta* method. Since nearly every chapter in the volume happens to be written by an adherent, admirer or expert of the school in question, naturally the volume as a whole bristles with vigorous authenticity and citations of the original texts, especially in all matters concerning the school in

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question. There is also a universally perceivable restraint on making the accounts needlessly historical, and this is yet again another great merit of the volume.

But there are also a few problem areas. Rāmānuja is perhaps the very first philosopher who resisted the Advaitic interpretation of the *prasthānatrayī* and tried to offer a well-rounded, alternative interpretation of some texts. Probably this alternative world-view was taking shape gradually and also in stages, which is why he is referred to, in the chapter on him, as the "Consolidator of the Viśiṣṭādvaita System". Rāmānuja's new system is in reality a very "rebellious" one (this is my preferred expression). Its rebellion against the received view is in fact much more profound than it is normally thought to be, and this point strikes us with great force only when we view Rāmānuja's unsuspecting philosophical moves against the total background of the complex development of all systems of philosophy, whether *āstika or nāstika*, that had existed before he appeared on the scene. In a way, Rāmānuja's system is very similar in its philosophical importance to Śaṅkara's critique of all the schools of philosophy that were in vogue in his time.

Let me also describe the philosophical scene around the time of Rāmānuja. There was the *nāstika* world-view consisting of the Cārvāka, the Buddhist and the Jaina schools. There was also the *āstika* world-view of Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Mīmāmsā and Advaita. The Cārvākas, Buddhists and Jains have always been atheistic in the sense that they never accepted the notion of God at any point of time in their history. Among the *āstika* schools, there is no mention of God either in the *Nyāya-sūtra* or the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*. Only later Naiyāyikas like Udayana accept the idea of God who has some assigned role to play in the world. Sāṅkhya is atheistic and in the Yoga school, God merely serves as an exemplar or a model for the aspiring yoga practitioner. Mīmāmsā refutes the idea of God. In Advaita, God is of course admitted, but not one as the ultimate, transcendental reality.

The most striking point that emerges from the above is that all these schools chose to construct their very complex and extremely sophisticated world-views without assigning any central,

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or even peripheral, role to God in their total and final scheme of things. As India was a deeply religious country and since the common people worshipped an astonishing variety of gods and goddesses, it is indeed completely baffling and strange that no god of the common people was ever used in any way by any philosopher in the construction of his chosen world-view and it uniformly remained like that for several centuries. But Rāmānuja suddenly changed all this by constructing a philosophical world-view in which God was assigned the central role. To properly explain this sudden transition as well as the radical difference between all earlier world-views and that of Rāmānuja, it becomes necessary to conceptually distinguish between the common or popular concept of god and the "God of the Philosopher", i.e., between popular theism and what I prefer to call "philosophical theism". Rāmānuja virtually transforms the earlier popular theism into philosophical theism.

It is in this specific and extraordinarily peculiar context of the complete transformation of popular theism into philosophical theism at the hands of Rāmānuja that some very important philosophical questions arise: Why did the philosophers of so many different schools at so many different places and also over such long periods of time consistently and uniformly avoid constructing any world-views in which God played a central role? Why did such avoiding take place in a social atmosphere that was heavily soaked in every imaginable variety of theistic belief and practice? What were the compelling philosophical reasons that made Rāmānuja reject all earlier world-views that systematically avoided embodying any form of philosophical theism? In short, what were the philosophical grounds based on which we may make sense of the emergence of the kind of very radical "break" introduced by Rāmānuja in an otherwise continuous tradition of philosophy that existed for centuries up to his times? The "break" is indeed quite extraordinary and momentous in the history of Indian philosophy, but why is it that it is not noticed for what it is worth and given the attention that is its legitimate due? I think that this volume was the right place where the above listed and any other similar or related questions had to be raised and answers to them attempted.

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The same sorts of questions arise in the case of the philosophical theism of Madhva also which follows Rāmānuja's in quick succession. It is true that most of the later theistic schools arose as substantial reactions to the system of Advaita as well as Rāmānuja, but still the entire development of theistic Vedānta from Rāmānuja in the thirteenth century to Swāminārāyaṇa in the eighteenth century unmistakably seems to be a clear break from the ways in which world-views were being constructed in pre-Rāmānuja times. In view of the above, I am of the opinion that it would not be unfair at all to expect such questions to be raised and answered in a major volume on theistic Vedānta appearing at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In spite of devoting a major part of the volume to Viśiṣṭādvaita, it is somewhat disappointing to find that while the exposition done by half a dozen leading scholars in the field happens to be exceptionally good, it is yet incomplete in this important respect.

There is also detailed coverage of the tenets of Dvaita Vedānta extending to five chapters, and there is one chapter even on Dvaita's achievements and relevance to modern world in which a suggestion is made that the major ills plaguing and bothering humanity will be cured by the adoption of Dvaita philosophy. There is also a chapter containing a very spirited defence of the concept of difference which is really as good as it can be, but parts of it seem to be written relying solely on the authority of Madhva. For example, *eka-jīva-ajñāna-vāda* or the theory "which advocates that this whole world is the figment of the imagination of one single embodied soul which is affected by ignorance" (p. 397) is declared to be held by both Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara, but without making any reference to any of the works of Śaṅkara himself. This is indeed astonishing since Gauḍapāda clearly refers to *jīvas* in the plural several times throughout his *Kārikā* and even uses the expression "*jīvā amī sarve*" ("all these *jīvas*") not just once but three times successively (IV. 68-70). As for Śaṅkara, we can see his clear rejection of *eka-jīva-vāda* as an absurd doctrine when he satirically observes, while commenting on *Brahmasūtra* III. 2.21, that "in case it is argued that there is only one *jīva* upon whose

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attaining *mukti*, the entire universe stands destroyed, then this universe containing elements like earth would not have existed at all (*ekena ca ādimuktena pṛthivyādi pravilayaḥ kṛta itīdānīm pṛthivyādiśūnaym jagadabhaviṣyat...*)."

Madhva may make whatever statements he deems fit about Śaṅkara or Gauḍapāda, but why should his statements stand in the way of any scholar checking their authenticity by referring back to the relevant original works themselves, especially when they are very easily available? I must observe here that such a procedure is not peculiar to this author alone, but is resorted to by many others as well when they write on Vedāntic topics. Also, throughout several chapters, positions are attributed to Śaṅkara which he never in fact held actually or even by implication. For example, Śaṅkara's contention that *brahmajñāna* is *vastutantra* (and that all correct knowledge is *vastutantra*) has definite implications for the construction of a proper theory of empirical or transcendental ignorance, but these have been completely missed by all those who have attributed to him a certain kind of *māyā-vāda* (i.e., the view that there is *māyā* or *avidyā* which is a (*sadasad-vilakṣana*) *vastu* possessing a *svabhāva* of its own), and this is promptly reflected throughout this volume also.

Gauḍapāda also makes a famous statement, "if the world were to exit, surely would it disappear" (*prapañco yadi vidyeta, nivarteta na saṁśayaḥ, Kārikā* I.16). While this kind of a statement is classified by all logicians as a counter-factual statement which is governed only by the rules of modal logic, it is treated as a simple "hypothetical" statement of classical Aristotelian logic and on that basis an entirely wrong conclusion is drawn about its validity [(p. 399)]. If the logic adopted by this author is adopted elsewhere, it is possible to effortlessly reject as invalid even several scientific laws like the Newtonian laws of motion, because those laws are also formulated in the same counter-factual statement form as the one made by Gauḍapāda.

One of the possible limitations of a multi-author volume is repetition of the same points or content by different authors, because each author deems it necessary to state the same points—

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sometimes without being aware that those points have already been made earlier by others—just to ensure clarity and completeness of his own exposition. If this is to be completely avoided, the editor may have to totally rewrite almost every chapter—a clearly impossible task. The present editor has not attempted this impossible task and therefore, little as well as big repetitions lie scattered throughout the volume. There are quite a few repetitions even within the small span of about twenty-five pages of the same chapter on Nimbārka. In the chapter on the Encounter between Śaiva Siddhānta and Advaita, the first twenty pages are devoted to giving an account of these two schools, and afterwards just a dozen pages are devoted to an exposition of the "polemics" between them. Since no one except perhaps a reviewer reads this kind of a volume from cover to cover and since most readers may only consult some specific chapter or other and that too only on occasion, the repetitions may not really matter a great deal in practical terms. Of course, repetitions can be happily skipped by most readers, and therefore they may at worst be treated as a tolerable nuisance.

One major impact of theistic Vedānta consisted in its periodic catalysing of Indian society to spur it to get rid of social evils and move towards achieving greater social justice and equality. The theistic schools inspired the composition, over centuries, of an astonishing variety and amount of devotional literature in all the regional languages of India. Therefore, it is indeed fitting that this volume includes brief surveys of such literature in the last two chapters concerning the *bhakti* movement in South and North India, respectively. While the chapter on South India extends to about seventy pages, the one on North India is about half that size. The chapter on South India covers the four states of South India, viz., Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala. While fifty pages are devoted to Tamil Nadu, twelve pages are devoted to Karnataka, seven pages to Andhra and six pages to Kerala. In the survey of North India, Maharashtra is covered in six and a half pages, Gujarat in three and a half pages and Orissa and Bengal together in seven pages. There is, at the end, a fourth section of

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thirteen pages covering the contributions of Ramananda, Kabir, Sufi poetry, Guru Nanak, Surdas and Mirabai.

What is deeply disturbing about these two last chapters is that while *bhakti* literature in each of the states covered above is indeed amazingly vast with dozens of contributors spread over centuries, their coverage is uneven and extremely brief except in the case of Tamil Nadu. Such uneven coverage may have the unfortunate effect of leading someone into wrongly believing that only a certain region of South India had a profusion of *bhakti* literature. Though the scholarship, sincerity, devotion and hard work of this author is absolutely beyond doubt and cannot be ignored, the tragic unevenness of coverage is not easy to overlook.

What is also surprising is the complete absence of any chapter that chiefly focuses on the philosophical foundations of *bhakti*. Since the notion of *bhakti* is at the very core of all theistic Vedānta, this omission is hard to understand and even harder to forgive. The foundations of *bhakti* came to be explained in an extremely interesting and novel way by Madhusūdana Sarasvati hailing from that *bhakti*-saturated Bengal. He was a leading proponent of Advaita that is usually supposed to endorse only the path of *jñāna* and not of *bhakti*. We should take thinkers like Madhusūdana very seriously, because the philosophers' interest must lie not so much in the different definitions or classifications of *bhakti* as in its philosophical foundations. It is sad that neither the volume on Advaita nor this one on Theistic Vedānta chose to dwell on the extremely interesting and important question of the foundations of *bhakti* as formulated by an Advaitin. After all, even Śaṅkara himself composed some of those incomparably beautiful hymns, blissfully cutting across the line sharply dividing *jñāna* from *bhakti*—a line so painstakingly drawn by many within the academic community of Vedāntins. While Śaṅkara merely blurred this line, Madhusūdana went on to explain the basis of how and why it may be blurred. Should that not be an interesting topic for a Vedāntin? Whoever is aware of the enormous and very extensive influence exercised by *nirguṇī bhakti* in North Indian culture will have no difficulty in appreciating the point I am making here.

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Another omission is that there is not even a very brief chapter on Śivādvaita in the volume and this omission becomes quite glaring in the context of Śaiva Siddhānta being given prominent coverage. Śrīkaṇṭha and Appayya Dīkṣita have made quite original contributions in this field and a chapter on this school would have at least facilitated the warding off of the otherwise possible mis-impression that Theistic Vedānta is almost completely Vaiṣṇavite in nature.

The paper used for printing as well as the printing itself is of excellent quality and it is no exaggeration to say that the volume is a bundle of aesthetic delight.

From some of the criticisms I have made above, it should not be concluded that the volume lacks in merit. The overall merit of the volume far outweighs any and all the deficiencies one may possibly find in it. The volume certainly shines forth very brightly in view of the fact that for this kind of a multi-author volume running into nearly a thousand pages and covering so many diverse schools and thinkers, the overall quality of the contributions is indeed very high and for this singular achievement, the editor as well as the contributors deserve very high praise. After all that I have said, if I should at any time in the foreseeable future turn to one single volume for authentic information concerning the theistic schools of Vedānta, and if there is also a single volume that I would be unhesitatingly recommending to others, it is this volume.

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C.K. Raju, *The Eleven Pictures of Time: The Physics, Philosophy and Politics of Time Beliefs*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 589, Rs. 695.

C.K. Raju's book *The Eleven Pictures of Time* is 'revolutionary', said the late Shri Arun Ghosh. Whether the book will bring about a revolution here or elsewhere only 'time', certain or uncertain will tell. However, undoubtedly it will make or should make the philosopher, the theologian, the scientist and the political theorist sit up, even stand up, and re-think and re-investigate many hitherto accepted conceptions and notions of time.

Through the parable of the fisherman, the mermaid, the advice of the priest, the merchant and the scientist, which constitute the prologue and epilogue, C.K. Raju encompasses a vast spectrum of disciplines, primary sources and a theoretical model in regard to the study of time. All this is accomplished through a smooth yet studied flow of the principal argument.

The discourse/controversies between the notions of time 'linear' and 'cyclic' has a long and complex history in many domains, theological, philosophic, scientific and artistic: the last remains untouched here. The notions walk out or overflow from one domain into the other. If theology and philosophy influence the emergence of scientific theories, the scientific theories affect political systems and social organization. Intentionality and motivation are as 'crucial' as discovery or invention. With masterly command of primary sources and a delightful sense of wit and

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humour, C.K. Raju traces the history of the notions of time—a period of over 2000 years is covered in swift strokes. The tension between 'linear' and the 'cyclic' continues to this day. Raju identifies the moment when, in his words, 'cyclic time was crucified'. Origen was cursed before the Fifth Council by Justinian. The tensions between 'linear' and 'cyclic' time have had a circuitous and yet perennial continuity. Well, the two meet or overlap.

The subscription to one notion, i.e., linear time, has had far-reaching consequences in the governance and structures of social organizations. For some time there has been the acceptance of the thesis that Christianity laid the solid foundations of the world-view which believed only in 'linear' time. C.K. Raju penetrates into the original sources and the debates, to prove conclusively that 'cyclic time' was indeed sacrificed. In contrast, Rama Coomaraswamy, son of the great A.K. Coomaraswamy, says that early Christianity also accepted the notion of cyclic time. He expounded the view in a seminar on Time held in 1990. C.K. Raju proceeds on the basis of Justine's condemnation of 'cyclic' time and therefore all its concomitants. Of importance is C.K. Raju's argument that these debates in the domain of theology influence—almost condition—and permeate scientific theories, old and new. The engaging fascination of the book lies in the author's ability to interconnect and to move freely to and fro in different disciplines and periods of chronological time, i.e. past and present. This enables the author to ask incisive questions and contest the many accepted suppositions about science, scientific discoveries and the scientists themselves. The investigative mind of C.K. Raju confronts practically all and everybody, exposes some skeletons in the well-guarded cupboards of the personal histories of some, and shows the clay feet of others so far held as deities and semi-gods of old and new science. This includes Newton, Einstein and Hawking, only to name a few. There are others. This awakens his reader from the slumber of easy acceptance to a stimulated state of disturbance and discomfort. The accepted verities expounded by many philosophers and scientists alike are broken. Newton has to account for his hidden

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theology and Hawking is asked the question, "Do Hawking's singularities ensure that time has a beginning? Will there be a machine God at the end of time? Or is physics being modified to suit the harmony agenda?" "Did Einstein quietly accept paternity for Poincarè's theory published earlier *and* for the equations of general relativity reported earlier by Hilbert? Can Einstein who claimed to have rediscovered statistical mechanics be credited with relativity without using a picture of time different from the picture of time in relativity?"

These questions logically lead the author to examine in great detail the allocation of 'credits' in scientific research. It is no longer merely a matter of recognition but also a matter of 'resources' for research, which is a key political and religious issue. Thus, does scientific theory and its postulates get intrinsically embroiled with the dominant political and religious discourse? Is scientific theory then 'context' and value free? This is the key question which is asked by a scientist with rare courage and boldness. Ilya Prigogine had asked the same question more gently in his book *Order out of Chaos.* He had acknowledged that 'science' and scientific investigation were to be placed in a cultural context and related to philosophic theories. In turn they affected discourse in other domains, particularly the social sciences. C.K. Raju goes a step further to point out not only the philosophic underpinnings, but also the role of the prevailing power equations in the realm of politics and religion. Perhaps never before have these dimensions been brought to the fore with such incisive sharpness.

The tension between the notion of linear time (i.e. absolute oppositeness of good and bad, heaven and hell) and cyclic time (admitting of recurrence and continuity etc.) is no longer a purely scientific matter in isolation. It is informed by other considerations and in turn permeates the domains of social organization. This raises the question of domination and subordination, singularity, monopoly, certainty and uncertainty, and a host of other fundamental questions, which have a direct bearing on 'life', and the act of living. They are not only an esoteric activity of scientific theory.

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C.K. Raju proceeds further to examine the notions of Broken Time: chance, chaos and complexity. This naturally takes him to explore post-Einsteinian science, particularly physics and mathematics. He does not elaborate on chemistry and biology, although he touches both. His focus is on 'time', linear and cyclic. Is a reconciliation possible? Has it been attempted? Can or will a resolution be found by tilting the arrow of time? With great deftness, not unmixed with telling stories and anecdotes as illustrations, C.K. Raju investigates the theories of 'chance', 'chaos' and an indeterminate future. He communicates complex theories simply, but of greater value are his illustrations on extensions of these theories of other spheres. One such engaging selection is on Entropy and Economics (p. 189). Equally thought provoking are the sections on chaos, unpredictability and creativity. Logically, this discussion on chance, chaos and predictability takes Raju to examine in depth the perennial question of computability—Man and Machine. The chapter is technical and complex, and no summary will do it justice. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to point out that after all the computation and machines which simulate and create virtual realities, there is that entity called 'spontaneity'. The author acknowledges it. Some amongst his readers will heave a sigh of relief. The paragraph on Time Travel and Life sums it up (p. 262):

> If time travel cannot be mechanised, how will one ever know anything about it? *Where* should one look for spontaneous events to gather evidence of time travel? Of what use would time travel be? (As before, we will postpone the question of use.)
>
> Where would one expect to find spontaneous order creation? Living organisms are a good starting guess! The mathematical models of physics cannot, at least at present, deal with living organisms at the level of everyday life. But physics can deal with the building blocks of life, viz biological macromolecules. The idea here *is* a reductionist idea in a way. Spontaneity is not something possessed only by living organisms in the large. It may be more concentrated in living organisms, but it pervades the universe.

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It is present at the lowest level of the building blocks. It is at this level that one can test for spontaneity and the existence of a tilt in the arrow of time, by examining the structure of biological macromolecules. This study is at present going on, and may take another few years to complete.

The summary of Part III is the crux of C.K. Raju's argument as also his *belief* (p. 269):

> The new resolution of the paradoxes of time travel also indicates the way to remove theology from physics, and delink science from the politics of religion. The key is to reject the Augustine—Hawking argument. The first step is to recall that the argument confused different pictures of time, by supposing that there is just one 'linear', 'Christian' picture of time opposed to one 'cyclic', 'pagan' picture of time. The confusion may be resolved by using one and one to make eleven—there are eleven pictures of time and not just two. The categories 'linear' and 'cyclic' are incoherent: the pictures within each category conflict with each other while there need be no conflict between pictures across these categories.
>
> Causality has been a key theological principle; it has also been regarded as a physical principle. Our second step is to reject the postulate of 'causality': that every event has a cause in the past, and that these causes can be traced indefinitely backwards to a moment of creation at the beginning of time. Within present-day physics, the most convenient way to reject 'causality' is to permit a tiny tilt in the arrow of time, so that some tiny influences may propagate also into the past. Physics can be mathematically reformulated using this idea of a tilt in the arrow of time. The quantitative consequences of this reformulation will not concern us here. A key qualitative consequence is that a tilt permits spontaneity (which differs from chance). Thus, physics may be reformulated so as to reject determinism and to resolve the problem of 'free will' vs determinism, or rather the problem of mundane time vs superlinear time.

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> Even though it may lead to a better physical theory, any new picture of time may initially seem paradoxical and counter-intuitive—because thinking involves language, which has an in-built picture of time. An alternative picture of time may even seem illogical and contradictory. But the time has come to displace logic from the metaphysical pedestal on which it was placed by rational theology. Logic is not a *priori*; there are many different logics to choose from, and changing the picture of time may change also the logic that applies to the world. The nature of logic must be decided by the picture of time that applies to the real world, not vice versa. It is time to end for ever the tyranny of metaphysics: the physical world—the empirically manifest—must be the ultimate arbiter also of the nature of logic.

C.K. Raju's argument now reaches its penultimate stage, where he almost conclusively declares 'Using 1 and 1 to make 11 instead of 2 also helps us to recognize the mutual incoherence of the distinct pictures of time' within each of the 'linear' and 'cyclic' categories—there are conflicts between individual pictures within each category. The linear-cyclic dichotomy is therefore incoherent and the crux of the matter is to resolve this incoherence'. The reader sits up again provoked into the question: 'then what were we arguing about all this while in the history of science and civilization?' C.K. Raju's answer is not direct. He takes another engaging circuitous route to arrive at a simpler solution: 'If the logically impossible is empirically observed, one should abandon the logic in use.' In short, what is wrong with paradoxes? This is the author's entry point into the much discussed world of Mice which half-killed the cat—Schrodinger's cat—and structured time to the problem of language, numbers and measurement. Discussion on incoherence within the notions of both linear and cyclic time, on structured time and microphysical time loops, etc. makes him ask the final question: 'what then is the correct picture of time?' (p. 297).

It is at this point that C.K. Raju advocates the tilt in the arrow of time. This is not a mere assertion. Once again he enters

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systematically into both scientific theories and many philosophic and metaphysical systems. His range is astonishingly and impressively large. He takes into account streams of Buddhist and Jain and other philosophies etc. In conclusion, for him a tilt means partial anticipation. A tilt involves no hypothesis, it concerns an exploration of the most general form of physics after relativity. A tilt is non-mechanistic. It implies spontaneity, and finally physics with a tilt seems better suited to model life (and the cosmos beyond the solar system) since it permits both memory and spontaneity. The suitability is being tested.

And yet, there is more to come in Part 4. There is now no time to dwell upon the sections on 'Time and Values', 'Time as Money', 'The Transformation of Time in Tradition' and finally 'Reevaluation of all Values'. Brilliant, thought provoking and singular in its concentric circles of cyclicity of thought and presentation.

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Sundar Sarukkai, *Philosophy of Symmetry*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 2004, pp. x+166, Rs. 250.

Physics is known for the guidance it receives from mathematical considerations of symmetry, that are closely akin to those of the simplicity of the laws of nature. Symmetry, even supersymmetry, plays a methodological role when the physicist is, to quote Paul A.M. Dirac—hot on the trail and has hopes of attaining some important result which will have a profound influence on the development of physics. This is more true of mathematics, which we may regard as the mother of symmetries. The mathematicians are mainly concerned with the mathematical consequences of an idea. While working out what can be deduced from various symmetries, mathematical ideas can trigger physical discoveries. Think of the discovery of the positron that was theoretically postulated by Dirac in order to solve the problem of the negative energy states for the electron. Dirac knew that this problem arose in any relativistic theory. One could just ignore it in the classical physics, where it was known since 1905, thanks to Einstein, that the value for energy, mathematically, can be either positive or negative. But this was no more possible in the context of the new quantum theory. Here it is possible for the electron in a positive energy state to jump into one of the states of negative energy. Dirac was led to the idea of setting up a new picture of the vacuum, in order to accommodate the negative energy states in the theory. This, in turn, led him to think of the new particles formed by the holes which were conjectured to be the places

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where there is an extra energy. Herman Weyl's mathematical conjecture during the early days of quantum mechanics that the new particles formed by these holes had to have the *same* mass as the electrons serves as a typical example of how it is mathematical symmetry that finally guides the physicist. Accepting Weyl's conjecture, Oppenheimer turned to physics and proposed that the holes were never observed in nature, for some reason not yet understood. It is these which Dirac had at first erroneously identified with protons but later on named as positrons. They received confirmation by the experimentalist Carl Anderson.

Taken in this kind of context, the book under review must be welcomed as a valuable addition to studies in the philosophy and beauty of symmetry. Written in an impressive style, the book is about symmetry, or better symmetry as beauty and, therefore, symmetry as a subject of aesthetic experience and reflection. No doubt, the discussion takes off from the beauty of symmetry in physics, in its laws or equations, often referred to as covariance of laws, or invariance of laws under the relevant transformations. But, in final analysis, it is metaphysics and phenomenology that are allowed to dominate it throughout. In fact, the very idea of formulating a philosophy of symmetry is divided by Sundar Sarukkai into a grand metaphysical and a phenomenological project. In this project, symmetry appears as an essential property. However, what I find most admirable about the book is the formidable task undertaken by Sarukkai by aiming at a unified account of symmetry as manifested in a whole diversity of forms, from nature, art, music and architecture to the properties of the fundamental laws of nature. Sarukkai has his eyes set on the philosophical foundations, as if a single all-embracing theory could do justice to all its multifarious uses, applications and their diverse contexts.

The subject of discussion in Part One is the fundamental theme of the universality of symmetry across many domains and disciplines including the physical and life sciences. The discussion is rich in terms of the examples as well as explanations of symmetry the author has chosen to employ. The section 3 (pp. 5-14) focuses

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on symmetry in science. It is particularly instructive in so far as the context of fundamental physical laws illustrative of fundamental symmetry principles, from the classical Newtonian physics through the Einstein's special and general theories of relativity and quantum mechanics to fundamental particle physics, is taken into account. As a result, we learn how vast and challenging symmetry is as a subject of critical reflection when the discussion is extended over different fields of study. In the context of physics alone, we can say that neither a single author nor a single book can do justice to such a formidable task. Yet, Sarukkai's attempt to explain it from science and metaphysics to phenomenology and aesthetics by trying to find out—what is common in the ideas of symmetry in natural objects, arts and music, and in its use in the fundamental formulations of the physical and life sciences—deserves serious attention. He boldly addresses the task of explaining the philosophy of symmetry in radically different, even totally unrelated, contexts.

The entire discussion in Part Two (pp. 25-104) is dominated by the metaphysical categories and by the questions posed by them in the present context. Think of objects, forms, shapes, tropes, quantum objects, sets, groups, classes, membership, ontological commitment to properties in physics, change, invariance, property, conservation laws and conserved properties, and symmetry as property. Sarukkai draws our attention to different attempts to define symmetry, almost all of them emphasizing invariance under transformations and change. While some of them imply that symmetry is a property among properties, there are still others which suggest that symmetries are a special kind of change, called transformations, that leave all the relevant structures unchanged. In the context of both the classical physics and quantum mechanics, symmetries may be taken to be the invariances of the relevant structures. The central problem posed by Sarukkai here is this: Is there a common conceptual thread in all these ways of articulating symmetry?

As the discussion moves to Part Three, symmetry assumes importance as if it was itself the subject of predication.

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Metaphysically and phenomenologically viewed as an object among objects, it is characterized by properties of harmony, balance, simplicity and so on, that go into the making of our phenomenological experiences of symmetry. But no case study is introduced, nor paradigms of the phenomenology and aesthetics of symmetry discussed. Discussion is rather structured more and more around the views of other authors and thinkers on subjects of beauty, aesthetic experience, judgement and symmetry, including those of Kant and Santayana. The main question raised here is what are the phenomenological experiences of symmetry like. Where is symmetry phenomenologically to be found? And Sarukkai himself suggests the answer. According to him, it is to be found in the aesthetic experiences themselves.

Using his philosophical skill, Sarukkai tries to integrate symmetry (or symmetries) in science with symmetries outside science. On page 155, he parenthetically says that—Even the scientific view of symmetry as invariant transformations can be seen as expression of an 'aesthetic' experience—But this is rather a very difficult undertaking which is not without its great difficulties. Is it possible to aim at an all comprehensive, unified, account of symmetry across all those disciplines that matter to us? Moreover, one might argue, is this not bringing *essentialism* back in rather openly in every individual discipline? The second half of the twentieth century saw essentialism on decline mainly because of the rise of the anti-essentialists Ludwig Wittgenstein and his followers. But Wittgenstein was not alone. Quite independently, Karl Popper too attacked essentialism in various forms. All of their followers argued against metaphysical essentialism, even against epistemological-ontological commitment to essentialism. And none of them suspected (as I have argued elsewhere) that essentialism suppressed at a particular level of analysis can raise its head at other levels. As a result of their anti-essentialist wave, it became a fashion to hold the view that neither language nor science are definable in terms of any unique set of essential properties. With this, it was believed by one and all that essential properties, no doubt a privileged metaphysical category from the

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time of ancient philosophers, have been finally laid to rest, or relegated to a ghostly existence. I think that Sarukkai's book persuades us to pause and reflect critically on the question of essentialism where others take the word of Ludwig Wittgenstein to be the last word. Sarukkai's main concern remains with the question whether there is a conceptual thread which is common to all the disciplines interested in articulating symmetry. This is exactly the kind of question which Wittgenstein rejects in his *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (*Philosophical Investigations* 1953) in terms of his framework of language games and family resemblances, ruling out that there is anything common to all that which we call language.

In the opinion of this reviewer, it is worthwhile to articulate symmetry within a specific discipline without giving up essentialism of properties as a framework of analysis, in some form or other. But the same cannot be said about the articulations sought across all the disciplines at the same time. Whom can it help in understanding symmetry in science better, if we try to articulate it across all the disciplines essentialistically, or assimilate symmetry of its fundamental theories to symmetry in other disciplines or areas of experience? But the search for an articulation of symmetry that aims at showing how all areas of knowledge and experience are united by this fundamental concept cannot be justified even if our starting assumption commits us to a philosophy of symmetry as an all-embracing metaphysical and phenomenological theory.

Do I have any criticisms of this book? Only a few quibbles. In German—Gestalt—has a standard meaning, which no Gestalt psychologist can afford to ignore. It means—form—or—shape. And in its verb form—gestalten—means accordingly—to form—or—to shape. While discussing (p.114) the principles of Gestalt psychology, Sarukkai raises the following questions: How do we perceive forms? What are the principles of vision that make perception of forms possible? Here he declares that—Gestalt means 'whole' and the fundamental basis of Gestalt is the interplay between the ground and figure in perceptual process. But this

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is rather very confusing for the reader. If she knows German, she will find it hard to decide how—Gestalt—is to be interpreted in the present context. The question is Can—Gestalt—always and in every context be interpreted to mean—Whole. Sarukkai's entire discussion in Part III is shaped by a lurking ambiguity. Not only his discussion of perception of forms and the role of the interplaying figure and ground in it, but the discussion at several places in the text is affected by this, making it difficult to understand him. To quote (p. 154): Symmetry is an aesthetic property Symmetry is disinterested, in the sense that such an attention causes pleasure. We never 'see' symmetry of an object and even in phenomenological experience it is not clear how it is accessed. *It arises only in aesthetic experience.* Symmetry is Gestalt just as an aesthetic property should be. When we refer to symmetrical figures we are talking of particular properties such as particular form, pattern, or colour distribution but these can only be considered symmetrical in the scientific view of symmetry.

On page 139, Sarukkai quotes Dirac as saying, It is more important to have beauty in one's equations than to have them fit experiments. And, the mathematician Weyl's example, among others, is cited because he chose beauty as the primary criterion for a theory even—when the facts refused to cooperate. Similarly, on page 140, he says: The many views of famous scientists and mathematicians given above should be seen, once again, as attempts by critics to articulate aesthetic properties in virtue of which pleasure is experienced. If we add to this Sarukkai's statements elsewhere in the discussion, it becomes clear and distinct what kind of philosophy he is aiming at. Consider the parenthetical statement on page 155: (Even the scientific view of symmetry as invariant transformations can be seen as an expression of an 'aesthetic' experience). Against Sarukkai's attempt to assimilate symmetry in physics to symmetry in aesthetic experience, I want briefly to point out simply that in physics it is not perspectival beauty but beauty as an indestructible property of formalism, in the sense of Dirac, which is meant whenever great physicists are guided by considerations of symmetry. The foundations of

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Einstein's general theory of relativity, P.A.M. Dirac pointed out, come from the great beauty of the theory. And this is something that cannot be destroyed, even in the presence of experimental discrepancies. It is the essential beauty in theory which is the real reason in believing in it. Here Dirac is clearly referring to symmetry in physics. Again, against Sarukkai's view as formulated on page 156, I would like to add that priority of symmetry over asymmetry and broken symmetry can be accepted only in the limited sense that the former is a sufficient but not necessary condition for understanding the latter.

While recommending this book to the reader seriously interested in symmetry, or symmetry as beauty, and in symmetry as a subject of critical aesthetic reflection, I have no doubt that she/he will find it quite original and thought-provoking.

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Sukhranjan Saha, *Studies in Advaita Vedanta*, The Registrar, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 2004, pp. x+238, Rs. 300.

It is a collection of seven articles. The author starts with the article "Many faces of the I" followed by the articles "Advaita Analysis of Suffering", "Shankara and Varna distinctions in Hinduism", "Inner Sense and Higher order Consciousness", "Translations and Elucidation of the definitions of *Svapraka-satva* in Citsukha's *Tattvapradipika*", "The case for *Anirvacniyakhyati*_I, The negative thesis and ends with "The case for *Anirvacniyakhyati*_II, The positive thesis".

Among these "Many faces of the I" is an interesting topic which relates to the true nature of I or self and the author has discussed at length wonderfully about the nature of I and how it is being perceived or experienced and almost all philosophical dimensions are analysed in the discussion and also all thoughts are well attended with clear insight into the subject. The advaitic view is clearly and profoundly established without leaving any scope for philosophical doubts whatsoever.

The second article "Analysis of Suffering" is something really unique. This subject takes the prime place in *Sutrabhasya* and is discussed at length. But I failed to understand why Prof. S. Saha has stated that Sankara has not discussed what exactly is the nature of this suffering and how *avidya* is relevant for its generation (p.20). Sankara exclusively deliberated this anartha or suffering in the name of *adhyasa* in the beginning of the *Sutrabhasya*. He concluded this discussion by a statement *Asya anarthahetoh*

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prahānāya ātmaikatvavidyāpratipattaye ca sarve vedāntāh ārabhyante. Therefore it can be presumed that *avidya* is the cause for suffering. In the *Sutrabhasya* it is said that *avidya* is the cause of *adhyasa.* And *adhyasa* is the effect and *adhyasa* is the cause for *vyavahara* which is the effect of *adhyasa.* By this we can come to the conclusion that *avidya* is *anartha hetu. Adhyasa* is the effect of *avidya.* Hence *vyavahara* preceded by *adhyasa* is *anartha* or suffering. Therefore the question of not discussing the nature of suffering does not arise.

In the third article "Sankara and Varna distinctions in Hinduism" the author has deliberated the meaning and significance of the varna system in Hinduism in a beautiful manner. In this connection he has also made an attempt to throw light on the deliberations in Apasudradhikarana in Badarayana sutras and also emphasized the need to look into the depth and true spirit of the varna system in Hinduism. At the end he summarizes the view of Sankara in the following lines: "Sankara however makes the statement as the concluding remark at the end of Apasudradhikarana, the statement that the knowledge of Brahman is possible through the puranas and it is open to the sudras. In our opinion this constitutes a great departure from the tradition and Sankara has brought about a revolution". By this the author has put forward the right perspective of Sankara about the concept of the varna system in Hinduism.

The next chapter "Inner sense and Higher order consciousness" is also an attempt to highlight the Nyaya perspective and Advaita perspective about the consciousness. The difference between Nyaya and Advaita philosophy about the nature and work of the Inner sense and consciousness is exhibited in a systematic manner. The place of *sakshi* and *sakshijnana* in Advaita Philosophy also takes a prime place in the discussion. But in this chapter a statement is given as "It is therefore concluded by the Advaitins that manas is not a sense organ and hence also that it is not an internal sense organ" (p. 50). This statement will not corroborate with the Advaitic thought. Only the author of *Vedanta paribhasha* propounded the theory that mind is not a sense organ. But

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Sankara accepts in his *bhasya* that manas is a sense organ. Therefore it is difficult to say that all advaitins accept the view of *Dhrmarajadhvari,* the author of *Vidanta Paribhasha.*

The next chapter is related to the definition of *Svaprakasatva* in *Tattvapradipika* of Citsukha Muni. *Tattvapradipika* is a unique treatise in Advaita tradition. It explains the Advaita doctrine by adopting the Indian logical methods. Later this logical method blossomed in Advaita siddhi.

Citsukha in his *Tattvapradipika* started the argument as to what is *Svaprakasatva.* He puts forward eleven definitions of *Svaprakasatva.* They are

1. *kiṁ svaścāsauāprakāśaśca iti svaprakāśaḥ.*
2. *svasya svayam eva prakāsa iti vā.*
3. *sajātīyaprakāśāprakāśyatvam vā.*
4. *svasattāyāṁ prakāśvyatirekavirahitatvaṁ vā.*
5. *svavyavahārahetuprakāśatvaṁ vā.*
6. *jñānāviṣayatvaṁ vā.*
7. *jñānāviṣayatve sati aparokṣatvaṁ vā.*
8. *vyavahāraviṣayatve sati jñānāviṣayatvaṁ vā.*
9. *svapratibaddhavyavahāre sajātīyaparānapekṣatvaṁ vā.*
10. *avedyatve sati aparokṣavyavahāraviṣayatvaṁ vā.*
11. *avedayatve sati aparokṣavyavahārayogyatvaṁ vā.*

After a thorough discussion the author shows the demerits in each definition and finally the eleventh definition, i.e. '*avedayatve sati aparokṣavyavahārayogyatvaṁ vā*', is accepted. Here I would like emphasize that Prof. Saha has taken a lot of care while translating each and every sentence and maintained the lucidity. The argument after introducing each and every definition in *Tattvapradipika* is meticulously translated without any ambiguity. By this translation Prof. Saha has proved himself beyond doubt that he is not only a philosopher with clear insights but a good translator as well.

The last two chapter "*Anirvachaniyakhyati*; The negative thesis" and "*Anirvachaniyakhyati*: The positive thesis" are different from other articles. It took me more time to read these two articles.

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I have found so many positive things in the 'Negative Thesis' as it was elaborated in such a way that we must apply our mind to the right thinking or perspective of the subject. All the discussions related to the *khyativada* or theory of error are well attended.

In the first of the *'Anirvachaniyakhyati'* Prof. Saha peeped into the depth of the 'theory of *Asatkhyati'*, 'The thesis of *Abhavakhyati'*, 'The views of Vacaspati on *Asatkhyati'*, 'The theory of *Anyathakhyati'*, 'Bhatta's view on illusion', 'Nyaya's view on illusion' and finally 'The theory of *Jnanalakshana'*. After a careful observation of each of theories he has refuted them on the basis of the respective traditional sastraic texts and exhibited his mastery over the subject.

In the second part of *'Anirvachaniyakhyati'*: he takes the discussion to a logical conclusion and it reaches its peak with the presentation of Advaitic views on *ajnana* and *adhyasa*. Analysis of illusory and corrective experiences adds more colour to the discussion. Ajnana is one such topic in the philosophical tradition which needs utmost care while presenting and no doubt Prof. Saha excels in it by presenting the various views on *ajnana*; especially highlighting the views of Kumarila about *ajnana* and concludes with the Advaitic thought which is really something wonderful. The last two parts are undoubtedly a serious research work.

The efforts of Prof. Saha in giving a good representation of some of the intricate issues of philosophy are commendable. A serious researcher of philosophy can take insights, guidance and inspiration from this work. No doubt Prof. Saha has contributed a thought provoking book to the readers. For this Prof. Saha deserves to be heartily congratulated.

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S. Balachandra Rao, *Indian Astronomy: An Introduction* (reprint), University Press, Hyderabad, 2002, pp. xiii+207, Rs. 250.

There have been a considerable number of publications on Indian Astronomy, several of which have brought to light the original texts of noted astronomers and their commentaries from the Vedic times to the 19th century. These publications are known to, and studied by, the scholarly community. But a general reader would find it rather difficult to understand them without an adequate Sanskrit background as well as the technical terminology involved. The author of the book under review, Prof. S. Balachandra Rao states in the Preface that this book on Indian Astronomy is designed mainly for the benefit of students and general readers, and its purpose is not only to create awareness of Indian Astronomy among the readers but also to make them proficient in Indian astronomical concepts, technicalities and computational procedures. The author, with his deep knowledge of Indian astronomy, has succeeded in producing a book which is educative and authoritative at the same time.

Prof. Rao has, in a systematic way, dealt with the Vedic origins of astronomy, the basic concepts of celestial sphere, determination of precession of equinoxes, the zodiac and *nakṣatra* systems, time divisions, intercalary months, calendar components, the method of finding *ahargaṇa*, planetary revolutions in a *mahāyuga*, computation of mean longitudes of planets, mean and true planetary positions and the like. A seminal aspect of Hindu astronomy is what is known as *tripraśna* or three issues, namely, *dik*

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(direction); *deśa* (place); and *kāla* (time). Some of the Siddhāntic texts have explained the determination of these three issues in considerable detail along with such related ideas as equinoctial shadow, accessional differences, rising sign of the zodiac, local latitude as well as co-latitude, and meridian zenith distance of the Sun. Prof. Balachandra Rao has elucidated all of them with mathematical details.

Another important component of Indian astronomy relates to the determination of the time and extent of eclipses, both lunar and star. There is no denying that Indian astronomers were aware of the conditions necessary for the occurrence of eclipses and have explained the causes of eclipses scientifically. Nevertheless, over the ages, the calculations adopted by them need what is called the *bīja saṃskāra* (correction), taking into consideration the precession of equinoxes and the corrections necessary for determining the precise positions of obscuring bodies. Unfortunately, the traditional astronomers or *Pañcāṅga*-makers, have not made attempts in this direction; instead, they use the relevant data of modern ephemeris in their computation relating to the occurrence and duration of the eclipse. Prof. Balachandra Rao has given a computer-programme in respect of the solar eclipse with an example and the procedure for its computation in the *Sūryasiddhānta*, an important basic text of the *Pañcāṅga*-makers.

An interesting attempt of the author is ready-to-use computer programme developed by him adopting the algorithms of the *Sūryasiddhānta* for the computation of true positions of the Sun, the Moon and the Moon's node, and the other planets.

In the history of astronomy during the ancient and medieval periods, India, by virtue of its geographical position and contacts with other contemporary cultures, played an important role in the transmission of astronomical concepts and practices, like in mathematics and medicine. The Caliphate at Baghdad (8th cent.) was interested in scientific astronomy. Ibn al-Adamī, in *Naẓm al-iqd* speaks of the visit of an Indian astronomer to the court of Caliph al-Mansur with planetary tables and other computations. Soon, under the orders of the Caliph, the *Brahmasphuṭasiddhānta*

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and *Khaṇḍakhādyaka* of Brahmagupta were rendered into Arabic by al-Fazārī and ibn Ṭāriq, respectively. They were known under the titles *Sindhind* and *Arkand*, respectively. Āryabhaṭa I was referred to as Ārjabahar. Al-Khwārizmī, who played a key role in the transmission of Indian decimal place-value system and notation, had also included in his works Indian astronomical tables. Later in the eleventh century A.D., Al-Bīrūnī emerged as an able transmitter of Indian astronomy.

Such a transmission was not one sided. Earlier, in the two or three centuries before and after the Christian era, there was some influence of Hellenic or Hellenistic astronomy on Indian astronomers of the time. Even so, the latter had fostered their original approach with needed modifications of the transmitted methods of calculations. Some reference to the transmissions from and to India in the book under review would have been welcome. On the whole, this elegant book, it is the reviewer's hope, would be widely read.

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REPORTS

Seminar on India and Asia: Glimpses of Aesthetic Discourse, IIAS, Shimla, 25–27 October 2004

Organised jointly by the Centre for Studies in Civilizations, India International Centre, Indian Institute of Advanced Study and the Indian Council of Historical Research this Seminar- second in the series was a preparatory exercise aimed at articulating an academic framework for an International Seminar on India and Asia to be held in 2005.

25 October 2004

The Seminar opened on the 25 October 2004 in the Seminar Hall of the historic Rashtrapti Niwas which now houses the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. The spirit of the scholarly ambience reminiscent of the founder-director Professor Nihar Ranjan Ray the great scholar of Arts in Asia pervaded the deliberations.

Professor Bhuvan Chandel, the in position Director IIAS extended a warm welcome to the participants—(a sentiment articulated unmistakably in the meticulous arrangements), spoke briefly about the IIAS and the participation of eminent scholars of Indian Art and Aesthetics, Professor Bettina Baumer, Professor R.N. Mishra, Professor Konishi and Professor Satchidananda Sahai who were currently Fellows at the IIAS. Dr. Chandel in her opening address spoke about the Indian and Western tradition,

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with meaningful reference to the thought of Plato and the importance of Nataraja. It gave another dimension and Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan in her concluding summing up noted that "we moved freely in space and time by juxtaposing Nataraja and Plato on the concepts of beauty and truth."

Introduction to the Seminar

Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya in a feeling tribute to Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray said that the Seminar was inspired by the memory of this great scholar of Asian Art who showed the beacon for this very significant field of civilizational studies. As one of the moving spirits behind this academic exercise he posed a basic question. Whether it is possible to take a large geophysical canvas for meaningful studies. He expressed great happiness about interinstitutional collaboration and hoped that the International Seminar in 2005 would be more focussed because generalizations he felt tend to kill research. Art discourses are difficult and have to be unified.

Raison D'etre of the Seminar

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, the Director of the Seminar in a moving reference to the academic atmosphere of IIAS paid her homage to Professors N.R. Ray and G.C. Pande and made sentimental references to Professors Chattopadhyaya and Daya Krishna (Chair). She thanked Professor Chandel for the hospitality and emphasised that the collaboration of various institutions was very significant as it gave different approaches to aesthetic discourse. She posed a question 'Can there be a single approach to aesthetics in this huge and diverse landmass of Asia? But she also asked can we deny that there always has been a dialogue for which the excavations provided ample evidence. Dr. Vatsyayan sought to bring out the similarity in the attitudes of the Orient and the Occident. There was diffusion

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among the scholars of the Orient and Occident. She made a significant reference to the dialogue between Tagore and Okukara—a point referred to by Professor Konishi also in his presentation.

She noted with regret that the Area Studies Departments of Universities in India focussed only on political and economic concerns and there was complete oblivion of Art and Aesthetics. It was to the credit of the IIAS, and Ministry of Education that pioneering research was taken up in this area. IGNCA tried to refocus on thoughts, ideas and artistic traditions of Asia without much success. Reverting to the IIC Project she said it looks at the Asia focus but regrettably there is scant role of literature. She made complimentary references to the endeavour and concerns of Centre for Studies in Civilizations. The pre-seminar was an exercise to deliberate on the State of the Art of Scholarship in Asia. She noted with concern the lack of a theoretical basis for the Aesthetic discourse and wondered whether there was one theory or a multiple of them. She also questioned whether there was a basis for comparisons and conflicts that emerged from China and Japan and their relationships with conflicts that emerged from Korea. We have tried to move from these relationships.

Setting the tone of the deliberations she concluded by saying that the Seminar was structured to move from concepts to concretizations.

Professor Daya Krishna who was chairing the session made a departure by introducing a theoretical and conceptual note. He said the realm of art was closest to the realm of mystics hence there was no dialogue as such but the work is a commentary and a reconstruction. He also raised the question whether there could a dialogue between different arts and whether it was from the point of view of viewer or creator. He felt geographical and time divisions were unrealistic because it is a continuum and we need to redefine the concepts of India and Asia and dialogue.

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Session II
Theories of Aesthetics in Asia

Chair: Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan

Opening the academic deliberations Dr. Vatsyayan referred to the Greek word "void" used to designate utterly empty space or extension, a limited universe for which the external void supplied a defining condition. If affected the separation of one object from the other and the distinctness from its non-existent successor. The only alternative to an existing object was empty space.

The Seminar gathered momentum with the very first presentation *Kuu and Ma: Vacant space and time in Japanese Art* from Professor Masetoshi A. Konishi currently a fellow at the IIAS. He brought up the Japanese and Indian connection in his reference to Okakura and his close association with Tagore, Vivekananda and sister Nivedita. Significant was the Santiniketan style of painting influenced by Japanese techniques and Indian idioms.

The theme of his paper was *Kuu* and *Ma*—the crucial concepts to define beauty in Japanese art. In a profusely illustrated lecture he highlighted the concept *Kuu* corresponding to *Sunya* in Indian philosophical thought. He however sought to bring about a distinction between *Kuu* which was neither void nor vacant space. *Kuu* he said was much more creative.

The term *Ma* are not meaningless vacancy of space and time but played an important role in the aesthetics of Japan and other Asian cultures.

Sung–Min Kim presented a paper entitled *Some distinctive principles of Korean Art and their comparison* on sentiment of sorrow and its sublimation in Korean Arts. Introducing the specific characteristics of Korean Arts in order to bring out Korean concepts of *Han* (sentiment of sorrow) *Sinmy yung* and *Moet* and their relationship in the context of creative process of the arts. The paper was significant for its attempt to relate the Korean concepts to the Indian Rasa theory.

Chhom Kunthea Presented. The *Rasa theory: Its application to literary criticism in medieval Cambodian Literature.* She also dwelt on

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the linguistic and phonetic interaction between Sanskrit and Khmer languages. A literary piece of lasting value is one that uses successfully the appropriate *Rasa* for a specific situation. The theory of *Rasa* is fundamental in Khmer medieval 19th Century literature. Balancing correctly the amount of *Rasa* is the key to creative writing in Cambodia.

Doraiswamy's paper was postponed for lack of time.

SESSION III

Chair: Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan

Opening the session Dr. Vatsyayan raised the question of what is experience and what constitutes experience.

Dr. Bettina Baumer Fellow IIAS Shimla presented a paper on *"Conceptual Roots of Aesthetics in Kashmir Saivism"*.

In the presenter's words the thesis of the paper was that aesthetic theories have grown on the fertile soil and spirituality of Kashmir Saivism and its different branches which have found a general synthesis in the encompassing work of Abhinavagupta. She significantly reflected on intercultural aesthetics and the applicability of the aesthetic concepts of an Abhinavagupta outside the historical—cultural context in which they have grown. The concepts of *rasa, dhvani* and *pratibha* are of universal significance and a dialogue with other cultures and philosophies is perfectly possible.

Professor R.N. Mishra in his paper *Aesthetics of Anthropomorphism* referred Art to Artists. He took up the theme of the human body. Indian literature secular and religious he said abounds in such descriptions. Pertinent to the theme of the Seminar was his observation that representations of those imageries materialized widely in Indian as well as in South Eastern or East Asian Art in the images of gods, goddesses, Apsaras, demons, Naga-Nagi etc. as represented in human or semi-human form.

Professor Himanshu Prabha Ray expressed a sense of unease with Professor Mishra's paper. She felt that by looking only at

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Sanskrit literature and its idea of beauty we have left a whole range of other Indian literature. Professors Dudhnath Singh and Om Parkash commented on Kalidasa's statement and wanted to know if every canon of beauty is already laid down then what is left?

In a brief observation Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya remarked that *Rupa* is value-neutral.

The Chair-person Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan thanked Professor Bettina Baumer for her deep and complex paper and assertions on the nature of creativity. She particularly referred to the last part of the paper that touched upon nature of creativity and fullness in void. In the mystical tradition the two significant words are *Pratibha* and *Camatkara*. There are Khmable, experienceable but not measurable. Referring to Professor Mishra's paper she said that there was theoretical discussion within the Indian traditions. It would be pertinent to see whether these concepts have been articulated in other traditions. We need to have different sensibilities of the body in the Indian and Asian traditions. This can extend to the mind body relationship through body representation.

Session IV
Interpretation of Monuments

Chair: Professor Bettina Baumer

The session was marked by the transition from theoretical discussion within Indian tradition and the articulation of these concepts in other Asian traditions.

Dr. Himanshu Prabha Ray in her presentation *Defining the Buddhist Sacred Landscape: Archaeology of Religious Architecture in Asia* attempted an understanding of the *Stupa* in its myriad manifestations across peninsular India, Sri Lanka and mainland S.E. Asia. The social history of the monument was brought out as an indicator of its aesthetic discourse. She focussed on Amaravati and Senath in Andhra and Kemetaka respectively and compared

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these with the monastic complex in Anuradhpura in Sri Lanka and Nakoru Pathom in Central Thailand. She concluded that though various Buddhist centres in Asia shared a common architectural vocabulary their historical trajectories are firmly rooted in regional and local cultural traditions.

Parul Pandya Dhar in her paper. *Morphology of Transformation: Torana* in *Indian and Cambodian Architecture (ca. 5th–9th AD)* traced the Morphology of Transformation of the 'torana' as an architectural feature in India and Cambodia. She put forth her conclusions against the backdrop of certain basic issues pertaining to shifts in aesthetic concerns, regional specificities and styles, architectural contexts, and the manner of transmission of architectural constructs from one region to another. Along with revealing kindred processes of form and transformation, she highlighted the need for employing architectural terminology appropriate to the ideological and utilitarian bases of the region and period under consideration.

Professor Sachidananda Sahai's paper, The *Symbolism of Neak Pean* a small temple in Angkor was significant for highlighting the motif of entwined Nagas (Neak Pean) as the name is the Khmerized version of Sanskrit expression *Naga Bandha.*

In a note-worthy observation on a theme very pertinent to the seminar Professor Shyam Kishore Singh observed.

"My query is to both Professor Sahai and Dr. Parul. In his paper Professor Sahai has referred to *"Nag-bandha"* in the Cambodian Temple architecture. Dr. Parul also has referred to *"garuda and snake"* in the Cambodian *Toranas.* I would like to know from both the scholars the significance of "The snake symbol" in Cambodian art. Whether there is any relationship between the snake symbol and the beliefs about royal power, welfare of the country and the people?

From my study in this subject matter I find that snake cult is a part of a pan Asian culture. We find this in the culture of China, Tibet and the countries of South-East Asia. In India it is connected with Tantras, particularly in the context of *Kundalini sakti.* In the traditional culture of the Meitee people of Manipur the coiled

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snake symbol has a very important place. It is associated with a conception of the cosmos, creation, fertility, royal power and the welfare of the state as a whole, and snake worship in the form of prayer to *"Pakhangoba"* is an essential feature of traditional Manipuri rites and rituals. There are about 360 (Three Hundred Sixty) different designs (symbols) of the holy snake.

Dr. Anita Verghese in her presentation *"Heterogeneous Heritage: Islamic Cultural influences on Vijayanagara Art and Culture as revealed through its Monuments"* explored the impact of 'Islamic' cultural influences, mediated via the Bahmani Deccan and the Delhi Sultanate but having their roots in the wider reality of contemporary Central-West Asia, on Vijayanagara, courtesy art and culture. These influences, as evident from monuments at Hampi-Vijayanagara, capital of a vast Kingdom from the mid-fourteenth century to AD 1565, are in four broad areas:

- The inclusion of Central Asian ghulams or attendants in the Vijayanagara court in the fourteenth and early fifteenth century.
- The impact of Bahmani Deccani architecture on Vijayanagara courtly architecture.
- The adoption of cut-plaster decoration.
- The borrowings from Islamic costumes in Vijayanagara courtly attire of costumes of male courtly figures (e.g. the use of Kulayi and Kabayi) and female dancers (e.g. the adoption of tight pyjamas and short flared skirts.)

However, while adopting such 'Islamic' cultural influences, at Vijayanagara an adaptation and transformation of these occurred, thereby creating something new.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan observed that cultures have a system of multi-layering of meaning.

Dr. Settar (invited speaker) raised the question about the concept of Asia and the forces that brought Indian culture to various parts of Asia, for instance Buddhism was our channel.

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Session V
Dialogues in Literatures and the Arts

Chair: Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan presented Dr. Lokesh Chandra's paper *"Avlokitesvara as Continuing Theogony of Interiorization"* as the author was not present. She acknowledged Dr. Lokesh Chandra's contribution in structuring of the Seminar and her useful discussions with him from time to time.

She said the theme of Avlokitesvara was very important because we have been talking about themes which have moved from a vast geographical area. Avlokitesvara is a complex theme which brings out the problems and solutions because it is impossible in Asian Civilization to create boxed categories as in the Shastric or art tradition. The multi-volumes on Avlokitesvara Hymnology in Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan tradition were noted. There is a body of literature in Japanese and Chinese because Avlokitesvara changes gender. It was noted that Dr. Chandra's paper moves at three different levels. It positions itself in terms of whether there is any connection between Vedic and Buddhist thought. There is very fine textual reference to prove that there was not only give and take but Brahmanic and Kshatriya tradition. He argues for the Kshatriya tradition. However there are many avenues of further exploration. He mentions that the gender should be feminine. The question arises what constitutes the interiorising of the Asian sensibility. The dynamics has to flower into multiplicity—the concept of Sahasrabahu—one body and many arms.

In a profusely illustrated lecture Dr. Radha Banerji presented her paper on *Vajrayana Buddhism and Art in Xinjiang.*

Dr. Bettina Baumer commented that the iconography and textual material of Tantric and Vajrayana Buddhism should be combined.

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Dr. Binay Kumar Mishra in his paper *Vishwakarma as an Aesthetic in Ancient Cambodia* highlighted that through the concept of Vishwakarma agencies of aesthetic realization have been institutionalised in India and Asia. On the basis of epigraphy he highlighted the importance of Vishwakarma in Ancient Cambodia.

Dr. R.N. Mishra commented on this significant contribution and mentioned that there were several parallels between Cambodia and India. The Purana story where Vishwakarma is born a Brahman and marries a milkmaid is an interesting instance of social reconstruction. Artisans relate themselves to the genealogy of Vishwakarma.

Comments on the need for a common terminology for different categories in Khmer and Sanskrit came from Dr. Parul Pandya Dhar and Professor Roy Choudhury (IIAS) observed that if we refer to Aesthetic Discourse there should be Dialogue and international terminology.

Dr. Sattar advised Dr. B.K. Mishra to consult more material. He remarked that there was no mention of Vishwakarma in Jataka stories.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan expressed concern about methodology. She felt that in terms of whatever the presentations are exploring in the data is the question of Buddhists and Shaivite texts, where do you draw the line between myth and history—sometimes it is myths and history at others it is texts and imagination.

Professor Chattopadhyaya sought to bring about a balance by exhorting that we should not be fetished by texts and be theory intoxicated. There should be a judicious blend.

Session VI

Chair: Professor Sacchidanand Sahai

Professor Mansura Haider's presentation (no script was circulated). *Interaction between Central Asia and India: A study* in medieval painting drew comments from Professor Warikoo on the historic–cultural

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contacts. Professor Roy Choudhury wanted to know the position of pictorial space. Professor Om Parkash Dube enquired how Indian tradition interacted with Iranian tradition. He remarked that paintings of Jehangir have fictitious biographical details.

Professor. R.N. Mishra wanted to know about the artists under the Mughals in Karkhanas and to which parts of India did it spread. He also added that Talim is known only in Kashmir and Murshidabad which relates very well to roop in early texts.

Professor Haider spoke about powerful Persian nobility and also about the interaction of Golconda and Bijapur Schools with Central Asia.

Summing up Professor S. Sinha said it was true that India is embedded in Asia.

Professor K. Warikoo presented a discursive paper on *India and Central Asia: Historico Cultural Contacts.* According to him Indian art, culture and philosophy made a profound impact in the pre-islamic Central Asia. The discovery of a large number of manuscripts and archaeological remains depicting Indian traditions in the oasis settlements of Kucha, Kihotau, Keshgar etc., testifies to the wide diffusion of knowledge and culture from India to Central Asia and onwards since ancient times. He illustrated it with numerous examples.

Professor Shyam Kishore Singh in *An Aesthetic discourse in the context of China and Japan* brought up an important feature in the art traditions of India, China and Japan—the holistic view of art in which the most refined art operates in the context of an integrated view of nature and human life. He drew a parallel between Chinese and Japanese art and aesthetic traditions parallel to Indian concepts of *Pratibha* and *Vyutpatti.*

In his Chairperson's remarks Professor Satchidananda Sinha concluded that it is true that India is embedded in Asia. It thus means a multi-cultural dialogue.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan proposed a vote of thanks. She said that the concerns about India and Central Asia were important. There is the genuine question about historical boundaries. These are all loaded in terms of historical situations and nomenclature whereas

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we are looking for plurality and kinship. No study is possible without the inclusion of Nepal. What we know as geography and religion are external issue. As far as art situation is concerned Kashmir must have a central position.

27 October 2004

The concluding session was chaired by Professor Chandel and Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan was requested to sum up the proceedings.

Dr. Vatsyayan said she had a difficult task first as a "mechanic" of the Seminar and now as a Rappoteur.

Responding to certain remarks regarding exclusions from the structure Dr. Vatsyayan explained that these were pre-seminars and collaborations (CSC-IIC-IIAS) were really always contextual. She observed that the Seminars moved freely in space and time as in Dr. Chandel's opening paper where she spoke about Plato on the concepts of beauty and truth and juxtaposed Nataraja. She recalled Professor Dayakrishna's observations who raised the question—what constitutes Asia—conceptual, geographical historical or the Asian consciousness.

The Seminar moved on to papers on concept, theory and to multi-layering (Japanese, Korean and Cambodian concepts). Theoretical discourse was brought in by Bettina Baumer who was pre-occupied with Space/No space and the emotional concepts of Akash, Abhas and Spandan. Bringing us right back to consciousness was Professor R.N. Mishra's "Expression–Attitude to the Body".

With Dr. Himanshu Prabha's paper the progression was to concretisation with tangible reference to archaeological evidence by her analysis of these monuments. However it was hard to draw linear trajectories.

There was move to fascinating areas of Naga—the symbolism of fertility and cyclists of time.

Interaction of Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.

Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya while thanking Dr. Vatsyayan felt that more theoretical elements need to be introduced in the

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nature of Art and History. Referring to the thought of Italian Philosopher Croce he felt that Art was expression and intuition and as such should not be identified with any physical object. He also cited the English Philosopher Collingwood who closely links art with emotions and expression.

A.K. ANAND
Associate Editor

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Sandhān, Vol. IV, No. 2, July–December 2004

Authors' Workshop on Social Consciousness and Culture in Colonial and Post-Colonial India: New Approaches, India International Centre, New Delhi, 8–9 December 2004

The authors of the essays for inclusion in the projected volume, *Social Consciousness and Culture in Colonial and Post-colonial India*, met to make initial presentations on the themes of their essays. They were requested by the Editor, Professor Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, to write a brief outline of their proposed essay and to make oral presentations reflecting on their theme for discussion within the group. This was exclusively a meeting of a small number of authors who would contribute to the projected volume.

This preliminary Workshop will be followed by a full-scale conference, including discussants and other invited area experts, in October 2005, where the authors will present their papers for publication. The format of the present authors' Workshop or colloquium was kept flexible to allow authors sufficient time for oral presentation, and also to enable each to get an idea of the themes other than his or her own in the volume and to consider as a collective, the agenda of the volume planned.

Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya initiated the discussion presenting an outline of the overall project. He pointed out that more than ten years ago Professor Ravinder Kumar had planned to edit a PHISPC volume on Cultural History, Social Awareness and Education in Colonial and Post-Colonial India; however, due to his other commitments he was unable to begin work on the project

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and no essay for the intended volume was received from authors who might have been requested. The present project is intended to fill up the gap and it will be a fitting tribute to the memory of Professor Ravinder Kumar.

The following authors made presentations at the Workshop and outlined the themes they address:

- Professor Amrik Singh (former Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University): The Challenge of Education in Twentieth Century India.
- Professor Hetukar Jha (Professor of Sociology, Patna University): The Indigenous Education System and Traditional Intellectual Training in Colonial India.
- Dr Kapila Vatsyayan (former Director, IGNCA, New Delhi): Reflections on Plural Cultures.
- Professor Indu Banga (Professor of History, Punjab University, Chandigarh): Changing Profile of Urban Society and Culture.
- Mr Hiranmay Karlekar (former Editor, 'Indian Express'): Print Media and Indian Society and Culture in 20th century India.
- Professor J.S. Grewal (Chairman, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, former Vice-Chancellor, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar): The Sikh Responses to the Colonial Environment.
- Dr Nasir Tyabji (Senior Fellow, Centre for Studies in Science Policy, JNU, New Delhi): Technology and Society in Colonial and Post-colonial India.
- Dr Basudeb Chatterjee (Professor of History, Calcutta University): The Idea of Law in Indigenous Consciousness in the 19th Century.
- Dr C.R. Yagati (ERRU, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi): Growth of Dalit Consciousness in South India: A Study of the Andhra Region.
- Professor Madhu Kishwar (Fellow, CSDS, New Delhi, and Editor, 'Manushi'): The Women's Emancipation Movement: Past and Present.

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- Professor Bhaskar Chakrabarty (Professor of History, Calcutta University): Politics, Culture and a Sense of History: Popular History Writings in Pre-independence India.
- Sabyasachi Bhattacharya: The Construction of Cultural Hegemony and Education in Colonial India.

The following four authors were unable to attend the Workshop but sent in writing an outline of their essays:

- Dr R.K. Bhattacharya (Retd. Director General, Anthropological Survey of India): Colonial Hegemony and Popular Consciousness in Peasant and Tribal communities.
- Professor Sujata Patel (Chairperson, Dept of Sociology, Pune University): A Vision of Alternative Modernity and Urban Consciousness in Colonial and Post-independence India: The Sociologist Patrick Geddes and the Poet Narayan Surve.
- Dr Nirmal Kanti Bhattacharjee (Editor, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, former Director, National Book Trust): The Trauma of Delivery: Literary Imagination in Punjabi, Bengali and Urdu after Partition.
- Dr Geetha Nambissan (Associate Professor, Zakir Hussein Centre for Educational Studies, JNU, New Delhi): Education of Dalit Women: Class, Caste and Gender.

Discussions in the Workshop gave rise to some ideas regarding expanding the scope of the volume so as to include new approaches which have developed in recent years.

From the title of the project it will be evident that the focus in this volume is on modern Indian socio-cultural history and on the colonial agenda in the domain of education, cultural hegemonisation and social intervention, as well as the Indian nationalist response. An effort will be made to examine the interface between these developments and what one may call 'popular consciousness', and the continuities and changes in the fabric of social and cultural life and social consciousness in late nineteenth and twentieth century India, cutting across the colonial and post-colonial divide.

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There is a substantial literature on different facets of this long-range socio-cultural process, including some recent writings inspired by the 'culturalist turn'. Our aim will be to put together a collection of papers by experts in the relevant areas of research in order to provide an overview and a critique of the present state of knowledge in their areas. Situating the output of individual and discrete pieces of research in an integrated comparative presentation will possibly yield a new perspective on the problems addressed. Hence the subtitle, 'New Approaches'.

While it will be unwise to try to anticipate the results of the proposed collective endeavour, our preliminary statement may try to identify some major themes the authors in the projected volume wish to address. Since education is the formative matrix in which the consciousness of the intelligentsia takes shape, some authors are addressing the developments in the domain of education (e.g., Professors Amrik Singh and Hetukar Jha; Sabyasachi Bhattacharya). The site of the formation of a new urban middle class, playing a major cultural role, in the urban centers are examined (Professors Indu Banga and Sujata Patel). Two specifically 'modern' things impacting on society and consciousness in nineteenth and twentieth century India were the Press and new Technology in industry—the subject of two of our essays (Mr Hiranmay Karlekar and Dr Nasir Tyabji). Among the relatively new concepts which came into play in the colonial period were the idea of law, as reframed under British rule, and the idea of history, appearing as a discipline and in a form unknown till the nineteenth century—these ideas are addressed in two essays (Professors Basudeb Chatterjee and Bhaskar Chakrabarty). The difficult task of exploring the general context within which the play of specific ideas, processes and cultural practices takes shape is taken up in several essays by authors who address the issue of cultural pluralities (Dr Kapila Vatsyayan), the response of peasant and tribal communities to cultural hegemonisation (Dr R.K. Bhattacharya), the response of a particular community, the Sikhs, to the colonial environment (Professor J.S. Grewal). A vitally important part of socio-cultural history, the growth of subaltern consciousness in the

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Dalit movement is examined in one paper (Dr C.R. Yagati). The latest entrant in the discipline of historical studies Gender studies, is expected to be addressed in an essay on the long-term trends and potentials of women's emancipation movement, authored by a pioneer in that area (Prof. Madhu Kishwar). The educational aspect of it is covered in another paper by a specialist in educational studies (Dr Geetha Nambissan). While each author will naturally focus on his or her area of interest, in the aggregate a convergence is likely to emerge in that a multifaceted theme is addressed from different angles.

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NEWS & NOTES

A Brief Report on the Activities of Centre for Studies in Civilizations

PHISPC Seminars

The following seminars were organized by PHISPC during July-December 2004.

1. September 24-25, 2004. *Seminar on Different Types of History*; Kolkata (Director, Bharati Ray).
2. October 27-29, 2004. *Seminar on From Physiology to Bio-chemistry*; Kolkata (Director, D.P. Burma).
3. November 4-6, 2004. *Seminar on History of Science and Philosophy of Science*; New Delhi (Director, P.K. Sengupta).
4. December 8-9, 2004. *Seminar on the History of Socio-Economic and Political Thought in India 1850-1950*; New Delhi (Director, Sabyasachi Bhattacharya).
5. December 13-14, 2004. *Seminar on Life and Organicism*; New Delhi (Director, N.S. Rangaswamy).
6. December 12-14, 2004. *Seminar on Consciousness and Value*; New Delhi (Director, Rajendra Prasad).

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PHISPC and CONSSAVY (EXTENDED PHISPC PROJECT) Publications

Under the PHISPC series, publication of major volumes and monographs has been undertaken. The following are the Volumes in this series.

Conceptual Volumes

*Part 1 *Science, Philosophy and Culture: Multi-disciplinary Explorations*, D.P. Chattopadhyaya & Ravinder Kumar (ed.)

*Part 2 *Science, Philosophy and Culture: Multi-disciplinary Explorations*, D.P. Chattopadhyaya & Ravinder Kumar (ed.)

Volume I The Dawn and Development of Indian Civilization

*Part 1 *The Dawn of Indian Civilization (up to c. 600 BC)*, G.C. Pande (ed.)

*Part 2 *Life, Thought and Culture in India (from c. 600 BC to c. AD 300)*, G.C. Pande (ed.)

†Part 3 *India's Interaction with Southeast Asia*, G.C. Pande (ed.)

†Part 4 *A Golden Chain of Civilizations: Indian, Iranian, Semitic and Hellenic*, G.C. Pande (ed.)

†Part 5 *Puranas, History and Itihasa*, Vidya Niwas Misra (ed.)

**Already Published*

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‡*Under Plan*

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VOLUME II LIFE, THOUGHT AND CULTURE IN INDIA (AD 300–1100)

*Part 1 *Life, Thought and Culture in India (AD 300–1000)*, K. Satchidananda Murty (ed.)
*Part 2 *Advaita Vedanta*, R. Balasubramanian (ed.)
*Part 3 *Theistic Vedanta*, R. Balasubramanian (ed.)
*Part 4 *Origin and Development of the Vaiśeṣika System*, Anantalal Thakur
†Part 5 *A Social History of India in the First Millennium AD*, B.D. Chattopadhyaya (ed.)
†Part 6 *Pūrvamimāmsā from an Interdisciplinary Point of View*, K.T. Pandurangi (ed.)

VOLUME III DEVELOPMENT OF PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN INDIA AND NEIGHBOURING CIVILIZATIONS

*Part 1 *History of Indian Science, Technology and Culture (AD 1000–1800)*, A. Rahman (ed.)
*Part 2 *India's Interaction with China, Central and West Asia*, A. Rahman (ed.)
*Part 3 *Development of Nyāya Philosophy and its Social Context*, Sibajiban Bhattacharyya (ed.)
†Parts 4 & 5 *Philosophical Concepts Relevant to Science in Indian Tradition*, Pranab Kumar Sen (ed.)
*Part 6 *India and China: Twenty Centuries of Civilizational Interaction and Vibrations*, Tan Chung & Geng Yinzeng
†Part 7 *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, AD 1500-1800*, Om Prakash (ed.)

VOLUME IV FUNDAMENTAL INDIAN IDEAS OF PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY, LIFE SCIENCES AND MEDICINE

*Part 1 *Chemistry and Chemical Techniques in India*, B.V. Subbarayappa (ed.)

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‡*Under Plan*

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*Part 2 *Medicine and Life Sciences in India*, B.V. Subbarayappa (ed.)
*Part 3 *Indian Perspectives on the Physical World*, B.V. Subbarayappa
†Part 4 *History of Indian Astronomy and Mathematics*, B.V. Subbarayappa

VOLUME V AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

‡Parts 1 & 2 *A History of Agriculture in India*, Lallanji Gopal & V.C. Srivastava (ed.)

VOLUME VI CULTURE, LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND ARTS

†Part 1 *Aesthetic Theories and Forms in Indian Tradition*, S.S. Barlingay, D.P. Chattopadhyaya and Kapila Vatsyayan (ed.)
†Part 2 *Architecture in India*, M.A. Dhaky (ed.)
*Part 3 *Indian Art: Forms, Concerns and Development in Historical Perspective*, B.N. Goswamy (ed.)
†Part 4 *Language, Grammar and Linguistics in Indian Tradition*, V.N. Jha (ed.)
‡Parts 5-10 *PHISPC in Regional Languages and Literatures*

VOLUME VII THE RISE OF NEW POLITY AND LIFE IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS

*Part 1 *The State and Society in Medieval India*, J.S. Grewal (ed.)
†Part 2 *Religious Movements and Institutions in Medieval India*, J.S. Grewal (ed.)
†Parts 3, 4 & 5 *Religious Systems of India*, S.R. Saha, N.S.S. Raman, M. Rafique and others (ed.)

VOLUME VIII ECONOMIC HISTORY OF INDIA

†Part 1 *Economic History of India from Thirteenth to Seventeenth Century*, Irfan Habib (ed.)

**Already Published*
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